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ENGLAND IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

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BRITISH ACTION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN
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PEACE OF UTRECHT.
THE POLITICAL DISTRIBUTION IS THAT EXISTING ABOUT
1660 AT THE END OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR.
Statute Miles

ENGLAND
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

A STUDY OF THE RISE AND INFLUENCE OF BRITISH POWER WITHIN THE STRAITS

1603-1713

BY

JULIAN S. CORBETT

AUTHOR OF

'DRAKE AND THE TUDOR NAVY' 'THE SUCCESSORS OF DRAKE' ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES

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PREFACE

THE substance of the present work has been given during the past year partly in lectures before the Senior and the Flag Officers' War Courses at Greenwich, and partly in the Ford Lectures on English History for 1903 at Oxford. It is now presented in a complete form on the not inappropriate occasion of the ~~ter~~centenary of the capture of Gibraltar.

In its present shape it is designed in some measure as a continuation of the volumes in which I endeavoured to trace the development of the fleet and the naval art, and the history of naval operations under the Tudors. In approaching the Stuart period, however, it seemed wiser to restrict the field. There can be little doubt that much that is repellent in our naval histories is due to the vast arena they attempt to fill. In the effort to be complete they swing us to and fro from end to end of the earth, till we lose the sense of continuity, fail to seize any underlying principles, and sink bewildered in a chaos of facts with no apparent connection and no defined progression. It is in the seventeenth century that this complexity begins to make itself felt, and discretion therefore suggested the desirability of seeking a leading line of development, and following it with as little distraction as possible.

During the Stuart period two such lines present themselves—the one our struggle for maritime supremacy with

the Dutch, and the other the rise of our Mediterranean power. Both exactly cover the period in question—from the death of Elizabeth in 1603 to the Peace of Utrecht in 1713—and both would serve. But there can be little doubt as to which is the more closely woven into the matter in hand, and which is of the deeper and more lasting interest. The struggle with the Dutch, though at the time it absorbed most of the attention and the heaviest effort, was, after all, but an episode in our naval history. It was an episode, it is true, of the gravest import, but with the wisdom of fuller experience we can now see that from the essence of things it could only have ended in one way. In the Mediterranean, on the other hand, we have to deal with a question that is always open, with history that we are living to-day, and with conditions which continued and remain the most vital preoccupation of the higher naval strategy.

Once to grasp the Mediterranean point of view is to be dominated by its fascination. It gives us a light by which we see the British Empire standing on the same base as did the greatest empires of the past, and buttressed by the inviolability of her oceanic position more strongly than the most enduring of them all. No less inspiring a thought could embolden a student to relate the history of the Stuart navy without touching the Dutch wars or the foundation of our oversea dominions. For this is what has been attempted except in so far as those two secondary aspects of the time modified or influenced what I venture to regard as the primary and central movement. The method has at least the advantage of affording us a fresh point of view. It is from the standpoint of the struggle with Holland and our colonial expansion that naval historians, and indeed others, have almost universally depicted the time, and it should be no matter of surprise if, viewed from the Mediterranean, it assumes

an aspect in some points so startling in its novelty as to arouse a suspicion of mirage. Events which seemed but the most trifling episodes appear as links in a mighty chain, reputations that stood high sink low, and others almost forgotten lift their heads, while judgments that have long passed into commonplace seem on all sides to demand revision.

Yet I cannot doubt that any one who can frankly clear himself of the insular standpoint and view the scene from the ancient centre of dominion will see it much as I have endeavoured to paint it, and will feel that, seen from any other side, its true proportions must be missed and half its fascination lost. Nor is this all. For I am bold to hope that by this means he will find in Stuart times a lamp that will light up much that is dark in later ages, that will even touch Nelson with a new radiance, and perhaps reveal more clearly why it is that our Mediterranean Fleet stands to-day in the eyes of Europe as the symbol and measure of British power.

The attempt to show how largely the position of England in Europe depended on the possibilities of fleet action in the Mediterranean necessarily involves the carrying along of an enormous weight of military and diplomatic history—history, moreover, that for the most part is only to be found in its relation to naval pressure in the correspondence of generals, ministers, and diplomatists. The majority of historians have ever ignored the naval influence except where now and then their attention is aroused by the thunder of a great battle. But, more often than not, the important fact is that no battle took place, and again and again the effort to prevent a collision is the controlling feature of widespread political action. As a rule, what did not happen is at least as important as what did, and it is perhaps mainly due to overlooking this truth that history has so largely ignored the sweeping

change in the European system which accompanied the appearance of Great Britain in the Mediterranean.

So long as we have the sure hand of Dr. Gardiner to guide us the difficulty is not so great. Indeed I cannot adequately express my sense of obligation to his great work. But where it ends the chance of error in the mass of undigested correspondence that takes its place becomes almost overwhelming. Much guidance to authoritative sources is, however, fortunately at hand in the 'Dictionary of National Biography,' which has infinitely lightened the labour, and particularly the articles of Professor Laughton, in which he has practically re-written the whole of our naval history in a way that few but naval students can adequately appreciate. My debt is also great to Mr. Firth, who is carrying on Dr. Gardiner's unfinished task, and who has generously placed at my disposal some invaluable material he has unearthed. Much too is owing to the works of Mr. Oppenheim and Mr. Tanner, whose 'Calendar of the Pepys MSS.' in Magdalene College, Cambridge, I have been permitted to use in proof by the kind consent of the Navy Records Society.

Finally my thanks are particularly due to Colonel Sir George Sydenham Clarke, K.C.M.G., R.E., from whose inspiring suggestions the idea of this work sprung, and whom I must gratefully call 'the only begetter of these ensuing' pages.

J. S. C.

November 1903.

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Map to Illustrate British Action in the Mediterranean from 1603 to 1713 . . . . . *Frontispiece*

ENGLAND IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

CHAPTER I

THE MEDITERRANEAN AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

When James I. succeeded Elizabeth, and England was still but one of the northern sea-powers, there stood at the extremity of the Gibraltar peninsula a sanctuary dedicated to Our Lady of Europa. Founded in an unknown past by the Moors, when Gibraltar Bay was the main inflow of Moslem invasion, it had grown in wealth and sanctity till, for those whose business was in the great waters, it became one of the most revered shrines in Europe. Every Catholic ship that passed saluted its miracle-working Madonna, and every heretic captain welcomed the glimmer of her unfading light that guided him through the Straits. Her altar glittered with costly gifts from commanders whom she had saved or helped; and before it hung great silver lamps, the offerings of world-renowned admirals, whose names symbolise for us the old domination of the Midland Sea. There was one from Giannandrea Doria himself, who was Don John of Austria's right hand at Lepanto; another from Fabrizio Colonna, of the great family of Papal admirals; a third from Don Martin de Padilla, Captain-General of the Galleys of Andalusia, to whom, in Cadiz Bay, Drake had first taught the bitter lesson of the broadside ship. That lesson was not yet fully learnt. Its deepest meaning was still dark. The galley powers continued to dominate the Mediterranean, and Our Lady of Europa still watched at its gates. But

a day was coming when the thunder of Northern cannon should proclaim, so that all must hear, the truth of what Drake and his fellows had taught; when English seamen should lay rude hands on the hallowed shrine, and the lamps of the Dorias and Colonnas should be loot for the officers of Byng and Rooke. The story of how that came to pass is the story of the rise of England as a Mediterranean power.[1]

The establishment of that power is one of the great facts of the seventeenth century. It was a time when much was attempted in European politics and almost everything failed. But England's bid for the domination of the Mediterranean was never got rid of, and it may perhaps dispute with the rise of Russia the claim to be the greatest and most permanent contribution of that strenuous epoch to the history of international relations. It is an abiding fact which, rightly seen, gives a living glow to a neglected period of naval history—a period which seems marked with little but confused and half-seen battles in the Narrow Seas with French and Dutch. Dazzled with the romantic brilliance with which time and literature have clothed the age that preceded it, we seek in the new period for the same attractions, and seek in vain. The great transition from oars to sails and the launching of English adventure upon the oceans give the Elizabethan days a fascination that none can miss. We have come to regard the time as the heroic age of our navy. It had indeed something Homeric in its sweep—something that makes the men and their arms loom large and dominate the events they shaped. But when their work was done and they lay at rest amid their trophies, the tale begins to move upon another plane; its meaning and its interest are no less deep; but they must be sought on other lines. It is no longer with the great sailors whose romantic careers had taught them the secret of the sea that we are so much concerned, nor with the details of build and armament that went to compose the weapon of their choice. In type both ships and guns were already what they remained till steam and iron did for sails what sails

[1] Lopez de Ayala, *Historia de Gibraltar*, cap. I, sec. 20.

had done for oars. The forging of the weapon and the making of the men who were its first masters no longer give the note. A deeper and a louder tone is sounding; for before us lie the mighty consequences of what they had done, the growth of the new naval science, and above all the undreamed-of change it brought about in the balance of European power.

It must always be with a sigh of weariness that we turn our backs on the Tudor days to face the colourless waste of the early Stuarts. At first sight there is no period in our naval history which appears so barren of interest or significance as the reign of James I. We have come to regard it as a time marked only by the decay of the national arm under the blight of what we now call Society, and by occasional commissions for its reorganisation that were dominated for good and evil by the party politics of the hour. There is but one expedition to relieve the dreary story of corrupt and inefficient administration and the efforts of earnest men to stop the downward course, and that expedition in its declared object was a contemptible failure. But this is not the whole story. There is a natural disposition to measure the importance of a phase of naval history in terms of the actions that were fought, and to forget that, besides being a fighting machine, a powerful navy is also a powerful diplomatic asset. The silent pressure of naval power has been well represented as its most potent line of energy, and it is in this aspect that the Jacobean period will be seen to have been dignified with an event of the deepest importance. For that abortive expedition, besides its declared object, had one which was undeclared and which gave the keynote of the century. For it was the occasion on which, with the intention of influencing a European situation, the navy of England first appeared in the Mediterranean.

When we consider how often since that day the same thing has happened, and how often and how profoundly it has seemed to control the course of history, it is impossible not to be stirred by the significance of the event. It was the direct and most startling outcome of the

completed transition. For some years men had understood what the new force meant upon the ocean. They had long seen that the strength which lay in the New World and in All the Indies must come at last into the hands of those who could command the oceanic highways; but it was a new and bewildering revelation to see what a change it foreshadowed for the Old World powers that lay around the Midland Sea.

For centuries the destinies of the civilised world had seemed to turn about the Mediterranean. Each power that had in its time dominated the main line of history had been a maritime power, and its fortunes had climbed or fallen with its force upon the waters where the three continents met. It was like the heart of the world; and even the barbarians, as they surged forward in their wandering, seemed ever to be pressing from the ends of the earth towards the same shining goal, as though their thirsting lips would find there the fountain of dominion. So too the mediæval emperors, as they sat in the heart of Germany, knew they were no emperors till their feet were set on its brink, and one after another they exhausted their resources in unconscious efforts to reach it. So strong was its influence that those nations of the North whose shores were not washed by its waters seemed to lie out upon the fringe of Christendom—barely within the pale of European polity. As allies or subjects they might modify the action of the central powers by pressure in rear or flank; but, so long as the galley remained supreme, the Midland Sea was closed to them, and they could never come near enough to the centre of energy to take a commanding line of their own. But now all was changed. So soon as it was apparent that the galley, even in its ancient home, could not hold its own against the galleon, the Mediterranean ceased to be purely the centre of the world. It became also a highway into the heart of Europe. The strategic points upon which the world's history had pivoted so long were suddenly seen to lie open to the West, and the outcast fringe of nations, into whose lap the oceans were beginning to pour an immeasurable power, were no longer without the pale.

It is significant of how bewildering the revolution was that the Northern powers were not the first to see what it gave them. It was rather the old nations, whom it robbed of their pre-eminence, whose eyes were first opened. From the outset it became an abiding dread of Spain that an English or a Dutch sailing fleet would enter the Mediterranean and discover its power. Yet characteristically it was not Spain who made the first steps to meet the new situation. It is true that ever since the defeat of the Great Armada she had been trying with changing success to create a sailing navy of her own, but this was in view of the defence of her Atlantic trade. In the Mediterranean she still relied mainly upon the galley fleets of her Italian provinces and the maritime republics that were her mercenaries. In this way, ever since Lepanto, she had been able to dominate her own end of the sea. The naval power of the Turk was broken, and the piratical states that lay along the north coast of Africa had ceased to be a serious danger. Within the Straits they could not by themselves contend with the Italian galley admirals, and without in the ocean, where the richest of the sea-borne trade now passed, they could not venture till they had learned the mystery of sails. It was they who first saw the opportunity and went to school to the English and Dutch.

In order to grasp the complex effects which arose out of the new conditions of maritime warfare, it is first necessary to have a clear view of how things stood in the Mediterranean. A glance at the map will show that strategically it is divided into two nearly equal areas by what came to be known as the Two Sicilies—that is, the island of Sicily itself, and the southern spread of the Italian peninsula, then occupied by the kingdom of Naples. In the eastern half and all its ramifications, the Turks and Venetians still contended for supremacy, and the contest was steadily going against the Christian power. Rhodes and Cyprus, so long the outposts of western influence, had never been recovered to Christendom. The effect of the battle of Lepanto had been merely to confine the Turkish power to the further half of the sea, and

this it now dominated with its advanced naval station at Navarino on the western shores of the Morea. All that remained to check its power were the great island of Crete and some other scattered stations, where the decaying power of Venice still maintained the Cross with ever-failing strength. The western half was dominated by Spain mainly through her possession of the Two Sicilies. Sardinia was also hers. Malta was under her protection, and there were established the dispossessed knights of Rhodes, still sharing with Venice the honour of holding the furthest outposts of Christendom against the Moslem.

The Spanish command of the western half, however, was not undisputed. The Barbary states, though no longer the formidable factor which they had been in the days of Barbarossa, were still active upon the sea, and from their main strongholds at Tunis and Algiers, both within the Spanish sphere, they continually disturbed it with their piracies. Indeed, as the Spanish maritime strength was slowly exhausted by the struggle with England, they had been fast recovering the power which Lepanto had shattered. In vain, during the last few years of the sixteenth century, the Pope had tried to set on foot another Holy League against their devastating activity. Spain would not respond, and without her nothing effective could be done. In 1601, however, he had succeeded. A powerful galley fleet, strong enough to have penetrated to Constantinople, was got together to surprise Algiers. All the Italian states except Venice joined Spain in the effort, and the command was again given to Giannandrea Doria, the evil genius of Christian naval power. As he had shown by his advice to Don John of Austria after Lepanto, and on other occasions when he was in chief command, he was a past master in the art of abortive campaigns, and this time he succeeded in doing absolutely nothing. He led his fleet to Algiers and brought it back to Messina without having struck a single blow. Two more attempts were made in the two following years, but with no more success, and the Barbary states grew more and more formidable on the

sea till every shore of the Spanish sphere was scarred with the marks of their raids.

These two main spheres, the Turkish and Spanish, which relate chiefly to the struggle between East and West, are not the only points of view from which the Mediterranean has to be considered. It has a secondary strategical aspect which bears more directly upon the European situation. From the middle of the sea two gulfs run up as it were towards the heart of the Continent, on either side of Italy. That on the west, where Genoa gave the only direct access to Savoy and the Spanish province of Lombardy, was dominated by the ancient republic which had been the great *condottiere* of the sea. With the Riviera and Corsica in her possession she was master of the situation, for France was as yet too weak upon the Mediterranean to exercise a counterbalancing influence from her Provençal ports. The dominating position of the place was fully recognised by the strategists of the time. For during the interminable struggle between Francis I. and Charles V. victory had always seemed to incline to the power that had control of Genoa. Though nominally independent, it was now practically a Spanish port—the vital point in the line of communication which bound Spain to the Austrian Hapsburgs and the Spanish Netherlands through her possessions in Northern Italy. Eastward of Italy lies the Adriatic, or, as it was then generally called, the Gulf of Venice; for Venice still claimed the same kind of right over it as did England in the Narrow Seas, and regarded it as a *mare clausum*. Here lay the disturbing factor in what would otherwise have been a simple problem of East and West. Venice in her semi-oriental spirit was usually on fair terms with the Porte. The mainspring of her policy was her Eastern trade, and this consideration complicated her attitude to the Turks as much as that of Spain was complicated by an unwillingness to entirely crush a power which, though infidel and hostile, yet served as a counterpoise to Venice. For Venice in the Mediterranean had been the same obstacle to Spanish dominion as England had been in the ocean, and, in spite of every

combination to crush her, her territory still spread a barrier between the two halves of the Hapsburg system which were now seeking to renew their lost solidarity.

It was the threat of this family dual alliance, which would go far to re-establish the empire of Charles V., that was the dominating fact in European politics, and it was just when its shadow was beginning to fall upon the nations that through its weak point in the Mediterranean the new sea power from the North was brought to bear upon it in a strangely romantic manner.

CHAPTER II

WARD AND THE BARBARY PIRATES

SOON after James had come to the throne there was haunting the alehouses of Plymouth a tattered seafaring man, a waif of humanity whose luck had cast him there, no one knew whence. His name was Ward, and he was said to be a Faversham man, a fisherman probably, who had taken to the high seas in the palmy days of privateering. He was known for a sullen, foul-mouthed, hard-drinking ruffian, who was seldom sober, and who would sit at his cups all day long and 'speak doggedly, complaining of his own crosses and cursing other men's luck,' quarrelsome too at his drink, yet always ready to take a cudgelling rather than fight. His occupation was gone, for the King had grown hard on privateering. In his eagerness to stand well with Spain and to preserve his hasty peace James had issued order after order calling in all letters of marque and bidding his seamen even in foreign service to return to their country. Deep and strong was the cursing all along the coast; but the orders were strictly enforced, and times at last grew so bad with Ward that he was forced to take service in the royal navy.

He shipped aboard his Majesty's pinnace 'Lion's Whelp,' then in commission with the Channel Guard. But here he was no better content. He was for ever grumbling over the hard fare and lack of drink, and lamenting the good times that were gone, 'when,' as he is reported to have said, 'we might sing, swear, drab, and kill men as freely as your cakemakers do flies; when the whole sea was our empire where we robbed at will, and the world was our garden where we walked for sport.' With talk of this kind he set himself to work upon his

shipmates, till one day, as they lay with the 'Golden Lion' at Portsmouth, he hinted to them that he knew a way to heal their ills. After much pressure he proceeded to tell them that a small bark which lay near them had been bought by a Catholic recusant, whose life had grown unbearable in England, and who, having sold his lands, was shipping all his worldly goods for France. Here he showed them their chance. They had but to board her suddenly at night, seize the treasure she contained, and be in clover again. The plot was soon hatched, some thirty of his shipmates agreeing to share the venture. It was settled that they should all ask leave for a frolic ashore, and then, such was the naval discipline of the time, when night came on they could steal off to the bark and help themselves to all they wanted, and the officers would never know they were not safe aboard. In an alehouse ashore the rascals elected Ward their captain, kneeling round him, tankards in hand, and all promised well. But, as ill-luck would have it, a friend of the recusant's had been struck with the ugly look of the gang, and advised him to get leave to stow his treasure on board the 'Golden Lion' till a fair wind came to put him beyond their reach. So it happened that, when Ward and his band seized the bark, they found nothing worth having but the dainties which the gentleman had provided for his voyage. On these they regaled themselves, cursing their luck and their captain till Ward saw them in better humour with their feasting. Then he quietly showed them it was impossible to draw back; there was nothing for it but the high seas; and so he induced them to put out. All that was wanted was a ship to serve their turn, and by a clever trick he managed to seize one off Scilly. She was a Frenchman of eighty tons and five guns. Renaming her appropriately the 'Little John,' after Robin Hood's lieutenant, he put back into Plymouth Sound, and there he quickly found enough men of the old stamp to complete his crew. Thus equipped, he stood for the coast of Spain. Off St. Vincent he picked up another prize. In the Straits he got two or three more, and then with his little squadron he held away for Algiers.

To his disappointment, however, the Dey would not listen to his overtures. A short time before, a certain Captain Gifford, an Englishman in the service of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, resenting the Dey's behaviour about a prize he had brought in, had recklessly set it on fire in the midst of the harbour, and had so nearly succeeded in burning the whole Algerian fleet as to make the Dey swear vengeance on all Englishmen from that time forth. Ward, therefore, hastily retired to find a more cordial reception at Tunis. Though here, as at Algiers, the Porte was still represented by a Pacha, the practical dictator of the place at this time was a Turkish adventurer, called Kara Osman, whom the Janissaries had elected Bey, and against whom the Pacha was powerless. This man Ward was clever enough to gain by promising to prey on all Christians except Englishmen and to share the profits with him; and on this basis he received permission to use the port as his base and commence operations.

Algiers was not long in following suit. Shortly afterwards a famous pirate known as Simon Danzer, Dansker, or le Danseur, and already notorious for his depredations in all parts of the world, arrived in the Mediterranean and was invited by the Dey to enter his service, which he agreed to do with the formidable squadron under his command. From these two men thus established in the most active centres of piracy the Barbary corsairs learned the new art of sailing warships, and under their Dutch and English masters progressed with a rapidity that could not long be ignored.[1]

[1] The details of Ward's career are from a work entitled *A true and certain report of the beginning, proceedings, overthrows, and now present state of Captains Ward and Dansker, the two late famous pirates; from their first setting foorth to this present time, published by Andrew Barker, Master of a ship, who was taken by the confederates of Ward and by them sometime detained prisoner.* London, 1609, 4to. Black Letter (Brit. Mus. C. 27, c. 6). Barker, who is careful to give the names of his informants for what he did not himself see, is generally confirmed by Father Pierre Dan in his *Histoire de Barbarie et de ses Corsairs*, a work he published in 1637, after returning from a mission to ransom captives at Algiers. Simon Danzer, he says, began his Algerian service about 1606. The date of Ward's mutiny is uncertain, but it is clear from Barker's report he must have been at Algiers at

During the later years of the Elizabethan war the Mediterranean from the Archipelago to the Straits had rung with the piracies of English merchantmen. Claims from all sides, and especially from the Venetians, were still being pressed upon James, and, though some of them may have been exaggerated or unfounded, there can be little doubt that the way roving privateers pressed their rights over Spanish goods in neutral ships was not always too regular. To have such a man as Ward, therefore, openly established at Tunis was an outrage not to be endured, and he had hardly been at work a year when the King of France found it necessary to send a special mission to Tunis to protest against what was going on. His envoy, having a firman of the Sultan to back his diplomacy and secure him the support of the Pacha, was able to exact from Kara Osman a treaty providing that no English corsairs should be suffered to use the harbour.

But Ward was too valuable an ally for the treaty to be anything but a dead letter. His depredations continued on an ever increasing scale till finally he dared to invade the sacred preserve of the Venetians, and crowned his reputation by capturing, after a desperate fight, one of their renowned *galeazze di mercantia*. For size and richness these vessels were hardly second to the famous East Indian carracks of Lisbon. Ward's prize was of fifteen hundred tons and valued at two millions of ducats. At the zenith of his fame the English deserter was now living in all the state of a Bey, surrounded by scores of obsequious attendants and rolling in riches, so that no peer in England, as one who saw him said, 'did bear up his post in more dignity.' He armed his great prize and sent her out as flagship of his fleet; but, being overweighted with ordnance, she was lost in a storm with Captain Croston, his best man, and a hundred and fifty English hands. It was the turning point of his fortunes. Ventur-

least four years before 1609. Dan says the Tunisians learnt the art of sails from an Englishman called Edward, but he was probably subsequent to Ward. According to Dan, Ward was at Tunis in June 1605 when M. de Breues was sent there by Henri IV. on the mission referred to below. (*Ibid.* pp. 165, 274.) Meteren, in his *Histoire des Pays Bas*, p 667a, also says that Ward was first in the field.

ing again into the Adriatic to repair the loss, he was met by the Gulf squadron consisting of a score of galleys with a *galleasse* at its head, which the Venetians had despatched against him and which drove him from his station with the loss of two of his ships and a number more of his men. So severe was the blow that he had to confine himself to vessels trading to Cyprus and Alexandria, with gradually declining fortunes. By 1608 he had but two ships of his own left, and that year some fifty of his men deserted in the 'Little John.' Osman smelt treachery, and it was all Ward could do to save himself from disgrace. But so great was his reputation, he was soon able to restore his position. The following year he was joined by three more English pirate leaders named James Bishop, Sakell or Sawkeld, and Jennings, and also about the same time by the famous Sir Francis Verney, who in the summer of 1608 had sold all that was left of his ancestral estates and disappeared beyond the seas. Others probably did the same; at all events, in the year after his reverse he was able to equip and man a squadron of fourteen sail, and seemed as formidable as ever.[1]

From Algiers Danzer, though not equally fortunate, had been equally active, and the Spaniards like the Venetians found it necessary to take serious steps to protect themselves. But, though galleys were well enough to keep command of the close waters of the Adriatic, they were useless against sailing ships in the open seas on either side of the Straits. Danzer, treating the coast-guard galleys with contempt, had intercepted high officials returning from Sicily, and venturing outside the Straits, as was the practice of the Algerines, he appeared off Cape St. Vincent with a mixed squadron of eighteen vessels. It was in 1608, just when the negotiations for a truce with the Dutch gave the Spanish Government breathing time, and they proceeded at once to reorganise the whole of their sailing navy. The northern or Biscayan division was remodelled under the name of the Cantabrian Squadron and assigned the duty of receiving the West

[1] See Lord Admiral to Salisbury, Aug. 8, 1609, *S. P. Domestic*, xlvii. 71; *Verney Papers* (*Camden Society*), 95.

Indian convoys at the Azores. Thus the galleons of the main Ocean Squadron were set free, and Don Luis Fajardo, who had recently been appointed to the command, set to work to form with them a fleet to sweep Danzer and Ward from the seas. At the time the King of Spain had on foot a great mobilisation of galleys which all Europe was watching, and of which no one knew the object, and, so long as Ward and Danzer were active, it could not go forward. Nothing could be more eloquent of the gravity with which the work of these two adventurers was regarded, or of the reality of the revolution they were working, than that it was found necessary to send against them the famous galleons of the Indian Guard with the Captain-General of the Ocean Sea at their head. That day in June 1609, when Fajardo put out from Cadiz to enter the Mediterranean for the first time with a fleet of broadside ships, marks a turning-point in naval history, and it was directly brought about by a Dutch corsair and a handful of deserters from the British navy.

Fajardo's force consisted of but eight ships of war and some light craft, but in Sicily he expected to meet a squadron under another famous English adventurer. This was Sir Anthony Shirley, the eldest of those three renowned brothers whose adventures at the Court of Persia were then in every one's mouth. After his failure as a privateer in the West Indies in Elizabeth's time he had gone under the patronage of Essex on a diplomatic mission to the 'Sophy,' and was now returned with his visionary brain full of a gigantic European coalition against the Turks. After visiting the chief Courts concerned he had reached Madrid, where, through the active furtherance of the Jesuits, he had been received with great favour by the weak-minded young King. He even expected people to believe, as he wrote in his autobiography, that he had been given for his purpose the supreme command of the Great Armada that was assembling, and whose mobilisation he persuaded himself was due to his own energy and influence. The truth seems to be that the only commission he ever had from the King was little more than that of privateer, with the indefinite title of

Admiral of the Levant Seas. Indeed his appointment would scarcely deserve notice were it not for its significance as a sign of the times. For it was an effort made by Spain herself to introduce English blood into the Mediterranean. As it fell out, little came of it. With his vague authority Shirley had proceeded to Italy early in 1607, and for two years had been wandering from port to port trying to get a fleet together and showing a special anxiety to induce English seamen to desert their ships and join his flag. By the summer of 1609 he had managed to form a small squadron, which he boasted to have numbered twenty-three sail and seven thousand men, but as yet he had done nothing; and in spite of his persuasive tongue and lavish hand he was beginning to be regarded as an impostor. His headquarters were at Palermo, where he was living like a Prince in the 'Arabian Nights,' and it was for this port therefore that Fajardo was bound in order to effect a junction.[1]

On his way he looked into Algiers, where apparently he expected to find Danzer, but he was gone. Weary of his employment or alarmed at the extensive naval preparations in Spain, the object of which was still a secret, he had already escaped from the Algerian service and shortly afterwards appeared with his squadron at Marseilles to make his peace and seek an asylum with the French King. Henry IV. was at the time absorbed with his vast plans for breaking down the threatening Hapsburg system, and with a watchful eye on the Spanish mobilisation was ready enough to receive such men with open arms.[2] Not finding his man at

[1] Meteren, *Hist. des Pays Bas*, 667b. He says Fajardo sailed 'en intention de se joindre à quelques autres navires sous la conduite de Thomas Shirleye lesquels il pensait rencontrer à Palermo.' The brothers were often confused, but Thomas is not known to have been out of England at this time. See *The Sherley Brothers* (Roxburghe Club). On September 9, 1609, Anthony wrote that he was about to start for an unknown destination from Palermo with twenty-three ships and seven thousand men. In November he was said to have seven ships and to have done nothing. *Ibid.* p. 71.

[2] Meteren (*Histoire des Pays Bas*, 709a) says he was appointed Convoyeur or 'Wafter' of the French Levant convoy, and that while so serving he landed near Tunis, where he was captured and murdered in prison.

Algiers, Fajardo took a cast up to Sardinia, on his way to effect his junction with Sir Anthony Shirley. There he fell in with a small squadron, which had been organised by a Frenchman of the old crusading stamp, and which deserves remembrance as the first recorded symptom that France too was stirred by the new movement. It was the Sieur de Beaulieu, a Poitevin gentleman, who, fired by the miseries of his fellow-countrymen on the seas, had fitted out at Havre a galleon and a pinnace as a scourge for piracy. He, or rather his captain, De Tor, had met already with considerable success and had apparently been joined by other vessels from Marseilles. From this man Fajardo heard that Danzer had been already received into the French service, and that it was useless to seek him further. The Frenchman, however, proposed that they should make a dash upon Tunis, and destroy the squadron that Ward, Bishop, Verney, and Kara Osman had gathered there for a cruise against the American treasure fleet. The proposal somewhat staggered Fajardo, who regarded the operation as impracticable, at least without the assistance of Shirley's squadron. On the Frenchman protesting, however, that he had been about to do it alone, Fajardo came round. Together they suddenly appeared in the Goleta, and there they found a squadron of war-ships almost ready for sea, some of which were of seven hundred tons, besides unarmed prizes, over thirty sail in all. They were lying under the guns of the fort, but the light craft were sent in at once, covered by the fire of the combined fleet. The result was a complete justification of the Frenchman's daring. The anchorage lay five leagues from the city, and, long before succour could arrive, the French and Spanish boats had fired the whole of the ships except two that they brought out.[1]

There was another story, followed by Motley, that he was assassinated in Paris by a merchant he had robbed; but Meteren's account is supported by a letter of July 1611, from the Viceroy of Sicily to Philip III., saying he had been recently executed by Kara Osman in Tunis—a report which the Viceroy confirmed in April the following year. See *Documentos Inéditos*, xliv. 104, 224.

[1] This is the account given by Meteren, *op. cit.* p. 667c, who probably had it from a French source. See Dan, *Hist. de Barbarie*, 1637, p. 169 *et*

It was the heaviest blow that the pirates had received since Lepanto, and all Christendom rang with the exploit. Indeed, so entire was the satisfaction in Spain that she did nothing in the Mediterranean to complete the work, Instead of being allowed to proceed with the powerful force at his command, Fajardo was recalled to Cartagena where the great galley fleet collected from all parts of the Spanish sphere was now completely mobilised. For months its gathering had been watched with growing anxiety from London to Venice, and at last its object was apparent. It was what has always been regarded by foreigners as one of the great mistakes of Spanish history that was on foot—the famous expulsion of the Moriscos. The descendants of the old Moorish population then formed an element that was unrivalled in the dominions of Spain for wealth, energy, and culture. Yet they were heretics, and the influence of the Church was sufficient to brand them as a danger and to force upon the King the heroic remedy of expelling them in mass. So, instead of crushing the reviving sea power of the Moslems in the bud, Fajardo was employed in carrying to Barbary tens of thousands of Spanish subjects, to give a new impetus to the wealth and activity of the predatory states. It is possible that Shirley too was employed in the same field; he certainly struck no blow against the corsairs to mend his broken reputation. It was not till the following year that he hazarded an attempt, and then it was only to make a cruise in Turkish waters with results so feeble as to bring him into irretrievable contempt. In a vain hope of restoring his position he made his way back to Madrid, and there gradually sank into poverty and senility, associating with fugitive English Catholics, vapouring to the end, with his head as high as ever, of the vast schemes he had on foot, and teasing the Spanish Government with fantastic designs to crush the naval power of his own abandoned country.

The immediate effect of the Moriscos' expulsion was as disastrous as it was unforeseen. It led at once to the

seq. Spanish authorities seem, however, to ignore the French squadron and give the whole credit to Fajardo. See Duro, *Armada Española*, iii. 324.

rise of Salee as a pirate port, and its launch upon its sinister career. Hitherto the Moslem corsairs had been practically confined to ports within the Straits, so that until the coming of Danzer the ocean trade had been fairly free from danger. But in a few months the Spaniards found that a number of their wealthy exiles had established a naval port on the ocean, buying and hiring ships from the North, till the seas about the mouth of the Straits began to swarm with corsairs more active, determined, and well equipped than those of Tunis and Algiers themselves. In vain they seized El Araish as a counterstroke; in vain they tried to block the neighbouring ports; all was useless. The galleons of the ocean had more than they could do to keep the Moriscos in check, and within the Straits the power of the corsairs was left to grow till, two years after Fajardo's victory, the seas of the Spanish sphere were almost impassable for trade, and its shores were being ravaged from end to end.

CHAPTER III

THE DUKE OF OSUNA

It is at this moment that a new figure appears upon the scene, who was destined to save the situation for Christendom and to mark the second step in the Mediterranean transformation as Ward had marked the first. This man was Don Pedro Tellez Giron, third Duke of Osuna, a personality as far removed from the melodramatic English pirate as could well be conceived. Son of a viceroy of Naples and a grandee of Spain, he had been carefully educated at his father's court for a public career. He was a ripe Latin scholar, was deeply read in history, and, on leaving the University of Salamanca at the end of 1588, had distinguished himself by composing and reciting a funeral ode to the Invincible Armada. Having succeeded early to his rank and estates, he had gone, in 1602, as the fashion was, to serve his apprenticeship to war at the siege of Ostend. The Homeric contest between Ambrogio Spinola and Sir Francis Vere had earned for itself the name of the first school of arms in Europe, and thither young gentlemen ambitious of a soldier's reputation flocked, as scholars did to the universities of Bologna or Padua. So high was his rank that no post sufficiently exalted for him to accept could be found vacant in the Spanish army. He therefore had to content himself with serving as a volunteer, and in this capacity he attached himself to Spinola's brilliant brother, Frederigo, with whom he had already formed a close friendship in Madrid.

It was a chance big with consequence. For it must have been in the strenuous young Admiral's company that he learnt those ideas on the importance of maritime

power which Frederigo had so urgently pressed upon the Spanish Government, and of which he himself was destined to be so loud an exponent. And more than this. His first naval action sufficed to make him a convert to the new system against which his chief spent his life in vain resistance. For his introduction to warfare was to be present in that last fight amid the Zeeland shoals in which Frederigo fell, and in which, as the Dutch medal boasted, 'the ships made an end of the galleys.'[1] The impression made upon his mind was one he never forgot. It opened his eyes to the great secret; and though in Spain the action was trumpeted as a victory Osuna read its real meaning. From his chief living he had learnt how dominion lay on the sea, and from his death he had learnt how alone that dominion could be won.

The following year he seized the opportunity of the peace rejoicings in London to go over and study the English navy. There he won James's heart by the beauty and wit of his Latin conversation, for he had spoken the language fluently since he was nine years old.[2] Osuna's opinion of the King was not so flattering. 'If King James,' he said to the Spanish Ambassador, 'were less of a pedant and more of a politician, there would have been no peace.' Refusing any official position he was able to pursue his inquiries in freedom, and by his native sagacity quickly got at the root of the principles by which Hawkins and Drake had made the navy what it was. Returning to Flanders to complete his military education as a commander of horse, he let no opportunity slip of learning from Dutch and French authorities all he could on the subject of which his mind was full. Having served with great distinction, especially at the relief of Groll, where he crippled his right hand, he returned to Spain when the armistice was proclaimed in 1607. There he found a most flattering reception await-

[1] *The Successors of Drake*, cap. xvi.

[2] Gregorio Leti gives an interesting account of how, with a view to diplomacy, he was taught Latin, between the ages of seven and nine, entirely from the *Colloquies of Erasmus*, without grammar or dictionary.

ing him, and received shortly afterwards a seat in the Privy Council and the Order of the Golden Fleece.

It was not, however, till some three years later that the opportunity came for making himself heard. The question of the appointment of a new viceroy for Sicily came before the Council, and Osuna seized the occasion to point out the high strategical importance of the island for the command of the Mediterranean and to speak his mind upon the shameful condition into which it had nevertheless been allowed to fall by the neglect of its naval forces. He showed that within the last thirty years the corsairs had landed and made havoc on its shores over eighty times, and that under existing conditions there was no prospect of an improvement. The Moslem forces at Tunis and Algiers were on the spot, while those of Spain were far away, and things were going from bad to worse. As it was, he said, the King was only sovereign of the territory which the guns of his forts could cover. 'The new Viceroy you are going to appoint,' he cried, 'will only go to be a spectator of the same things; he will only go as a Court newsman to record landings, burnings, and assaults.' Such a condition of affairs, he protested, could not continue, and there were but two courses by which it could be stopped—the King must either pay the corsairs blackmail to leave the island in peace, or else make it the centre of such a naval force as would suffice from the commanding position it occupied to sweep them from the seas. It was seldom a King of Spain heard such home truths at his council table, and Osuna's prompt reward or punishment was that he received the appointment himself.[1]

It was in the spring of 1611 that he took up his memorable command. On his arrival he found assembling at Messina the whole available force at the Spanish disposal in the Italian seas—twelve galleys of the

[1] Osuna's career may be followed in Captain Fernandez Duro's *El gran Duque de Osuna y su marina* (Madrid, 1885), and in the third volume of his *Armada Española*. A long series of documents relating to his Viceroyalty are in vols. xliv. to xlvii. of the *Documentos Inéditos*. The earliest authority is an Italian Life of him, by the Milanese historian, Gregorio Leti, published in 1699, from whom I have taken the details of his youthful career.

Neapolitan squadron, ten more from Genoa, five from Malta, while Sicily itself furnished seven—in all thirty-four, and others were expected from the Pope. In command was the Marquis of Santa-Cruz, son of the original commander-in-chief of the Great Armada, and almost the only galley admiral in the Spanish service who had not disgraced himself during the English war. It was his intention, with the powerful force at his disposal, to make a raid on the Barbary coast to secure a supply of galley-slaves. By September he managed to get ready for sea and make a dash for the Kerkenna Islands in the Gulf of Gabes, but he got possession of them only with considerable loss, and returned with five hundred wretched Arab fishermen and peasants to show for his costly campaign. To such a depth had naval warfare sunk in the Mediterranean under the influence of Giannandrea Doria.

More deeply confirmed in his ideas than ever by what he saw, Osuna was already at work. Pending arrangements for beginning a sailing squadron, he laid down two galleys of his own, which he might use as he liked, to make a demonstration of his views. One thing he was bent on improving was the position of seamen. He had seen in England the effect of what Hawkins had brought about by persuading the Government to improve the pay and diet of naval crews, and in health, vigour, and discipline his vessels quickly became a shameful example to the King's. So remarkable was the influence of his reforming energy that he persuaded the Provincial Parliament to give him an extraordinary subsidy, with which he fitted out four more of the time-honoured craft. By the spring of 1612 he thus had six efficient galleys at his disposal, and with these he proceeded to hit his first direct blow. It fell on Kabilia, the nearest Tunisian port to Sicily, which his admiral, Don Otavio de Aragon, took and burnt. Returning to Sicily with his captured slaves, Don Otavio joined Santa-Cruz at Trapani at the west end of the island, and thence made a dash at Tunis itself. He had learned that the corsairs, having recovered from Fajardo's punishment, were again fitting out a strong squadron for a direct attack on the Spanish West Indian

convoy. The surprise was an entire success. Nine or ten vessels were burnt at their moorings and some brigantines or small galleys captured. The blow was followed up by a productive cruise to the eastward. It was clear a new spirit was abroad, and the corsairs, stung to fury, resolved to nip it in the bud by a crushing blow upon Osuna's headquarters at Messina. With a powerful mixed fleet of ships and galleys, they too attempted a night surprise; but Osuna had already succeeded in bringing his influence to bear on the rabble of desperadoes and broken officers who regarded the Sicilian service as their Alsatia, and the pirates were flung back with the loss of two ships, two galleys, three galleots, and some five hundred men.

The following spring the campaign opened equally energetically with an attempt to surprise Bizerta, where the corsairs, taught by bitter experience the vulnerability of Tunis as a naval station, were establishing a new one, with large docks and magazines, in anticipation of the latest French ideas. It is interesting to note that the place was found impregnable, though subsequently Don Otavio captured and destroyed Cherchel to the west of Algiers.[1] Later in the year, while cruising again to the eastward for intelligence of a large Turkish fleet reported to be at sea, he heard that a squadron of ten galleys had been detached to collect tribute in the Archipelago. These he sought out and found between Chios and Samos. Though inferior in numbers he was secure in the superior efficiency which Osuna's system gave him, and attacked without hesitation, with the result that he took five hundred prisoners, freed over a thousand Christian slaves, and brought back to Messina the Turkish flag-galley and six others as trophies of his victory.

It was as though Frederigo Spinola's spirit was stirring again, and galvanising the old system into new life. One exalted Spanish officer wrote enthusiastically to

[1] Captain Fernandez Duro says the attack on Bizerta was successful and puts it in the preceding year (*Armada Española*, iii. 337). I have, however, followed Don Otavio de Aragon's own account of his exploits. See *Documentos Inéditos*, xlv. 88.

Philip that such galleys and such organisation had never been seen, and that Osuna's assiduous study of the art of war from its grammar upwards showed what a master of it he had become. This was true enough. His work, so far, was only preliminary to the main idea which his mastery of the art of war had taught him. What he had done with galleys he believed he could do fourfold with ships. Still, a sailing fleet was not yet to be had. Fajardo with his ocean galleons was busy with Salee, seizing the port of Mehdia close to it, and watching a Dutch squadron which was hovering on the coast. The Dutch were already beginning regularly to police the Straits, and Evertsen their admiral was suspected of intending a seizure himself. Yet Osuna saw no reason for delaying a more vigorous offensive, which his master Spinola and his studies of English methods had taught him to be the other great secret of naval warfare. He had already laid down two galleons which he meant to be the missionaries of his faith, and, taking a leaf out of the pirates' book, had secured the services of some French corsairs, the chief of whom was a Norman captain, the notorious Jacques Pierre. While under their direction he was bringing his ships to completion, he began urging on the Government at Madrid that, having seen what a mere handful of efficient and well-led galleys could do, the King of Spain should undertake a real campaign to finally crush the Moslem sea power. In answer to his appeal the Government sent him a score of galleys under Prince Philibert of Savoy, who for political reasons had just been made Captain-General of the Galleys of Spain, in succession to Doria. With those of Italy he mustered a fleet of fifty-five at Messina—big enough, as Osuna thought, to turn the Turks and corsairs out of every nest they held. But when he saw how Philibert's galleys contrasted with his own, his hopes fell. The Spanish taint was upon them all, and little could be expected. Even as Philibert lay immovable at Messina, the Turkish fleet made a raid on Malta under his very nose. It was from Navarino they had come, and a brilliant and successful reconnaissance of the port followed, during which

the two Egyptian flag-galleys were captured just outside. Full information of the Turkish movements was thus obtained. Philibert followed with his whole force, and then, quite in the style of Doria, finding no heart to attack or ability to maintain a blockade, he returned to Messina without firing a shot.

From that moment Osuna washed his hands of the King and his galleys, and resolved thenceforth to play his own game. In Flanders he had seen the little Dutch ships lying off the Spanish ports week after week and month after month, and closing them up, and here were all the King's galleys unable to watch a single harbour. By every device in his power he tried to get the Government to build him a little fleet of sailing vessels that he might show his master how the work should be done. As yet there was not sufficient confidence in the Northern notions, and the scheme fell through. Still, his own two galleons were ready, one of forty-six guns and the other of twenty, with a pinnace to attend them, and he sent them boldly into Egyptian waters. There they immediately captured a squadron of ten transports on their way from Alexandria to Constantinople. But so far from assisting him to get the sailing ships which he was begging of the King, his success only won him a reprimand. There was an old regulation forbidding any royal officer to fit out sailing ships for privateering. Osuna had technically broken it, and that was enough for Madrid. In vain he urged the importance of blockade, and of being able to keep the sea in winter; in vain he reminded his master that, unless he commanded the sea, he could never command the land. He pointed to the English ships still at Tunis, against which his galleys were useless, and argued that the unhappy regulation had been made before the corsairs had learnt to use broadside ships. 'When your Majesty,' he wrote, 'issued the order that "round-ships" were not to be used, they did not know in Barbary so much as what a tartan was, and now Tunis alone has sent out more than eight-and-forty great ships.' All was useless. The Government, suspicious and conservative as ever, was inexorable.

But Osuna was not to be deterred. In 1616 his services were recognised by his promotion to the viceroyalty of Naples, and thence he continued his exertions. By the spring, besides five new galleons nearly completed —the 'Five Wounds' he called them—he had ready for sea a squadron of five other ships averaging over thirty-five guns and a large pinnace. All were equipped and organised on English lines. The sailors were no longer the mere drudges of the ship's company, but had been raised more to the standing of the soldiers, in berthing, food, clothing, and pay. Equally important was his bold reform in abolishing the dual captaincy, which was the curse of the Spanish service. Instead of a captain of the soldiers and a captain of the seamen, he appointed one officer who, as in England, had command of the whole ship. At the same time he imitated, and even went beyond, the English system of concentrating the main fighting power of the ships in their batteries. They became like the Northern warships in principle mobile gun-carriages, instead of relying for their offensive power chiefly upon marine infantry. In some of his latest galleons the gunners even outnumbered the ordinary seamen, and guns were carried of a heavier calibre than any admitted in the British navy. Indeed, so heavily were his vessels armed that it would seem the lower tiers could only be used in the finest weather; but this was a defect by no means unknown in the fleets he had taken as his model.[1]

[1] For details of Osuna's fleet as finally constituted, see *Documentos Inéditos*, xlvi. 503. His latest and largest galleon was 'Nuestra Señora de la Concepcion,' of 6,000 *salmas* burden, which was about the same size as the 'Prince Royal' of 1,200 tons, the latest addition to the British navy (Guglielmotti, *La Marina Pontificia*, iv. 313, vii. 293). A comparison of their armament (by the light of Norton's *Usual Table for English Ordnance*, 1628) shows clearly Osuna's exaggeration of the new ideas.

'Concepcion'	'Prince Royal'
2 50-pounders	2 cannon-perriers, 24-pounders.
14 35 „	6 demi-cannon, 30 „
30 25 „	12 culverin, 15–20 „
2 demi-culverin	18 demi-culverin, 9–11 „
2 perriers	13 sakers, 5 „

The 'Prince Royal' also carried four small breech-loading pieces; the secondary armament of the 'Concepcion' is not given. Thus the 'Con-

There remained the difficulty of finding an admiral. In Osuna's service was one Francisco de Ribera, a half-pay ensign, but what experience of the sea he had had, if any, we do not know. His seamanship may safely be set down to Jacques Pierre's tuition. In this man Osuna was destined to find the hand he wanted, and his was to be the distinction of being the first sailing admiral in the Mediterranean.[1] In the early part of the previous winter the corsairs' ships had swarmed so thick in the Neapolitan seas that trade had been brought to a standstill. Osuna in desperation had sent out Ribera with a galleon of thirty-six guns. He was at once attacked by two corsairs of superior force, but after a five hours' fight he beat them off at nightfall, and they would not await his invitation to renew the action next day. Passing on to Trapani he picked up his pinnace and two other vessels, ran across to Tunis, and cut out two ships from under the guns of the Goleta forts.[2] For Osuna this was enough. Ribera was given the command of the six vessels that were ready and sent off eastward to watch the Turkish galley fleet. As he was watering at Cyprus he heard that the Turkish Admiral was looking for him with forty-five galleys. Only too ready to be found, Ribera awaited their approach off Cape Celidon. On July 14 the Turks were seen approaching, and then was fought the battle which finally opened men's eyes to what Osuna was doing. For three days it raged, and every morning the Turks renewed the attack with increasing desperation. But all in vain.

cepcion' was a 50-gun ship (counting only the heavy muzzle-loading pieces, or 'ladle' pieces, as the Italians called them), and the 'Prince' was a 51-gun ship. But it will be seen that the weight of metal in the 'Concepcion' was far the heavier.

As to crews, the 'Concepcion's' complement was 54 officers and gentlemen, 66 gunners, 60 mariners, and 20 boys, or 200 in all. The normal complement of such a ship in England would be at least 500 men, of whom 40 would be gunners, 340 mariners, and 120 soldiers. The crew of the 'Concepcion' would probably be filled up with soldiers, who perhaps assisted in working the guns in the same way that the mariners did in the English service.

[1] Osuna had married Donna Catarina Henriquez de Ribera, daughter of the Adelantado-Mayor of Andalusia, but Francisco is not stated to have been her relation.

[2] *Documentos Inéditos*, 363.

So crushing was Ribera's fire and so well disposed his vessels, that the galleys could never board, and during the third night they retired cut to pieces, leaving Ribera triumphant on the field he had chosen. Doubtless much of the success should be put to the credit of Jacques Pierre, whom Osuna began to treat with a familiar intimacy that shocked Spanish notions of propriety, but Ribera was the hero of the hour.[1]

The victory made the profoundest impression from the first. Irregular as it was, even the Spanish Court had to recognise it; and in spite of its having been fought under Osuna's private flag, contrary to the standing order against which he had protested in vain, Ribera was given the rank of Admiral and the coveted Cross of Santiago. Still it can hardly have been with unmixed satisfaction that the Spanish ministers contemplated the new force that Osuna had generated. The skill that gave it life was from the North, and not their own. If Osuna's success had been great against the time-honoured weapon of the

[1] How Ribera managed to beat off so overwhelming a force is uncertain. He certainly divided his squadron into two groups, two vessels in reserve and the rest as a main body, but the formation of this group is not clear. Captain Duro says he formed them *uniendo las cuatro, proa con popa, ciñendo el viento con trinquete y gavia*, as though they were close-hauled under fore-courses and main top-sails in line ahead. If so, Ribera must have been quite in the first rank of his art; for up to this time there is no perfectly clear account of an action fought line ahead in close order. But, although Captain Duro's authority is very high, Ribera's despatch seems hardly capable of bearing the weight he places on it. Ribera says: 'When I saw them (the enemy) I made signal for the vessels to close (*de juntar bajeles*): having closed, I struck all sail and gave them orders that the vice-flagship, the "Carretina," and the "Urqueta" should keep together always; and if it were a dead calm *se diese cabo por los costados tres*,' an expression which is far from clear. However, it was not calm; and after detailing his other orders, he proceeds: 'These orders given, I made sail towards the Armada, and coming within cannon shot I furled sails except the foresail and main top-sail so as not to hinder the vessel being steered.' As there was wind on each day, the obscure order issued in view of a calm may be discarded. It seems Ribera kept steerage way the whole time, and in his advance he says: '*Yo me puse en cuerno derecho di mio bajeles y los lleve juntos como pudieron o si fueron Galeras.*' That is, 'I took my station on the extreme right of my vessels, and kept them as close as they could go, or as though they were galleys,' which seems to indicate nothing but the old line abreast.

Mediterranean, it only emphasised the growing anxiety for what it would mean should the Northern sea powers choose to assert themselves within the Straits; and it was while the poets were still singing Ribera's victory that the Spanish Government found itself face to face with the contingency they had so long dreaded.

CHAPTER IV

SIR WALTER RALEGH AND GENOA

To grasp the significance of the new situation it is necessary to turn for a moment to the state of Europe, as Ribera's shattered ships limped home from their victory. Ten years had not passed since the truce between Spain and Holland had ended the old wars in which Elizabeth and Philip II. had been the dominant figures, and already the nations were grouping themselves for that still mightier contest which in the name of religion was to scourge and rend the face of Europe for thirty years. On the Catholic side was seen the renewal of the old relations between the Spanish and Austrian branches of the Hapsburgs. Spain and the Empire were again in close alliance, and all there was to prevent their complete solidarity was on the one side Savoy, pressing upon the Lombard possessions of Spain and threatening the security of her submissive servant, Genoa; on the other Venice, planted astride the direct line of communication between the King of Spain and the Emperor, and entirely dominating the ports at the head of the Adriatic where the Empire touched the sea. As for the Protestants, a great league seemed to be forming round the British throne. Since the Princess of England had married the Elector Palatine, James I. had come to be recognised as the head of the Reformation, and he, with a well-meant intention of averting the threatening outbreak, was endeavouring to make a match between the Prince of Wales and the Spanish Infanta. The negotiations were going far from briskly, and even James could not conceal from himself that his efforts might fail. Like Elizabeth, therefore, he was not averse to preparing for a

rainy day by adding to his resources, while at the same time he spurred the reluctance of the Spanish Court by letting it feel the sting of his sea power. In English eyes the tender spot, which had been whipped so sore in the old days, was still the Indies and the Atlantic convoys, and Sir Walter Ralegh survived as the personification of the bygone policy. Ever since the accession he had been lying in the Tower. He was now released and was soon busy preparing an expedition which many believed was intended to revive the wild work of Drake's young days. It was certainly the hope and intention of Ralegh's anti-Spanish supporters that it should. The King, as certainly, was actuated by a desire to fill his empty coffers by peaceful discoveries and to jog the King of Spain's memory as to what a hostile England meant. It was exactly under these conditions that, forty years before, Drake had been allowed to sail on his famous raid into the Pacific.

But there were onlookers who saw a little more of the game. While the heirs of the Elizabethans were living still on the oceanic tradition, others had been watching what Ward and his like had been able to achieve for the corsairs in the Mediterranean, and the power they had driven Osuna to develop in self-defence. These men, the arch-intriguers of Europe, weary of the eternal repetition of the old moves, were hugging themselves with delight at the sight of a new piece on the board that bid fair to change the whole game. It was no longer only for the extremities of his vast empire that the King of Spain need tremble. Deep in the vitals of his system they saw two points that were as much exposed to the action of the new power as his wide-spreading limbs. It was no longer a question of Cadiz and the Spanish Main, but of those old focal points of European polity, Genoa and Venice.

At both points the inward pressure of the two halves of the Hapsburg dominion had caused an eruption of hostilities. It was in the ever active crater of Savoy that the first explosion had occurred, and although in 1615 the Spanish Governor of Milan had found it necessary to

come to an accommodation with his insignificant enemy, his chiefs at Madrid could not sit quiet under the humiliation of the peace to which he had committed them. He was recalled, and a hard-bitten veteran, Don Pedro de Toledo, Marquis of Villafranca, sent out in his place with a barely concealed intention that he should pick a new quarrel.[1] The turbulent Duke of Savoy, with his eyes always fixed on Genoa, was ready enough with French and English encouragement to begin again; and thus a kind of semi-official war was raging between him and the Spanish Governor of the Milanese. At the same time Venice was fighting Ferdinand of Styria, the heir-presumptive of the Austrian house of Hapsburg and the actual ruler of that portion of its dominions which stretched down to the Venetian frontier, feeling for the sea at Trieste and the other little ports of Carniola. Thus Savoy and Venice were engaged in what was in fact a joint struggle against the new Hapsburg alliance, and the two wars had fused into one. So galling, indeed, became the action of the Venetians on the eastern frontier of Milan that Don Pedro de Toledo, when Osuna's fleet was about to sail against the Turks, had begged him to employ it in making a diversion against the Venetians instead. Osuna, bent on first forcing back the Moslems, had refused; but since Ribera's brilliant victory his hands were free, and moreover there were new and urgent reasons for compliance.

John of Barneveld, who was now the virtual dictator of Holland, with his usual broad perception, saw clearly where the keys of the great Catholic combination lay, and towards the end of the year 1616 news had reached Madrid that a powerful Dutch squadron with four thousand troops on board, under Count Ernest of Nassau, was about to sail for the Mediterranean, intended for the service of

[1] Don Pedro was at this time in his sixtieth year. He had served under Don John of Austria and Parma in the Netherlands, under the elder Santa-Cruz at Terceras in 1582, and had filled successively all the high naval offices in Spain, as Captain-General of the galleys of Naples, of the galleys of Spain, and of the Ocean Sea. To him also had been confided the chief direction of the expulsion of the Moriscos. See *Documentos Inéditos*, xcvi. p. 4, *note*.

either Savoy or Venice. During the summer the Count had offered his services to the Signory of the Republic, and they had obtained permission from the States for him to levy three thousand men and sufficient transport to carry them to Venice. By the end of November they were all embarked and were waiting for a wind in the Texel and Brill.[1] The dreaded hour had come and the anxiety at Madrid was profound. During December despatch on despatch in duplicate and triplicate was sent to the Italian viceroys, telling them that at all costs the Dutch must not be allowed to enter the Adriatic, while Santa-Cruz was ordered to Gibraltar to stop them there. But Osuna could do little or nothing. His old ships were not yet recovered from the mauling of their three days' fight at Cyprus, and the new galleons were not yet ready for sea. As for doing anything with the galleys, he protested it was impossible to stop sailing ships with oared craft in winter, and presently came fresh orders that he was not to try. Osuna was to direct all his efforts to reinforcing his colleague at Milan with troops, and to confine his naval action to closing all the South Italian ports so soon as the Dutch had passed, in order to cut off the Venetian food supplies. All Naples and Sicily were resounding with preparations for the rescue of Milan and the relief of Gradisca, Ferdinand's frontier fortress at the head of the Adriatic, which the Venetians were besieging, and Osuna urged more strenuously than ever the necessity of sailing ships for the work he had been set to do. Face to face with its helplessness the Spanish Government was at last convinced. The Council of State sat solemnly on Osuna's despatches and resolved that he was right. 'Finally,' so their resolution ran, 'we are of opinion that it will be well to write to the Duke in appreciation of his zeal, and that it will be of more use and pertinence to spend money in fitting out broadside ships as being the best to resist the enemy, seeing that they themselves employ that kind of vessel; because galleys are of small service except in anticipation of a large galley Armada, of which there is now no question.' Thus at last did the

[1] *Carleton Letters*, pp. 54, 96, 101.

inert Spanish Government declare its first official recognition of the naval revolution to which for years it had so obstinately shut its eyes.[1]

But the danger did not end with Holland. There was more and worse behind. Ralegh's expedition was slowly approaching completion. In vain Gondomar, the Spanish Ambassador in London, had exhausted his almost hypnotic influence over the King in trying to stop it, and no one could tell what it was really intended to do. James was chafing more than ever over the cool reception his marriage overtures had met with in Spain; Winwood, his anti-Spanish foreign secretary, was forcing him further and further into the attitude of a Protestant hero; and whispers were afloat that not the Indies but Genoa was in jeopardy from Ralegh's fleet.

While Nassau lay in the Texel, Lionello, the Venetian Ambassador in London, noticed that Scarnafissi, his colleague from Savoy, was continually in mysterious communication with the King and Winwood. Something of deep importance was clearly in the wind, and Lionello pressed Scarnafissi to take him into his confidence. Under the most solemn promises of secrecy, which Lionello promptly broke, the Savoyard revealed that he was proposing to the King, with Winwood's support, that Ralegh, instead of being sent to the Indies, should be reinforced with some of the King's ships, and then, in concert with some Dutch and French vessels, should enter the Mediterranean and surprise Genoa. Already Lord Rich had been permitted to fit out two privateers under the flag of Savoy; at this time, moreover, James was taking active diplomatic action in the Duke's favour; and during January 1617 he continued, so Scarnafissi said, to regard the scheme with favour. Ralegh too, the Venetian Ambassador was assured, was quite ready to change his voyage of discovery into a raid on Genoa, and he was keeping his eye on him and his fleet, ready to act the moment that Venice decided to hoist her flag in the Mediterranean. So Lionello wrote

[1] See 'Consulta de officio del Consejo de Estado,' Madrid, January 17, 1617. *Documentos Inéditos*, xlv. No. 423.

to his Government on January 19, 1617. A week later he wrote again to say that Scarnafissi had seen the King on Sunday and had been referred to Winwood to discuss the details. Winwood had informed him that what the King wanted to be assured of was first the facility of the operation, and secondly what share of the plunder was to be his. Scarnafissi replied that success was assured, and that, as to the booty, the Duke of Savoy only wished to satisfy the King, and all he had to do to enjoy the lion's share was to send a large enough force to secure it. Winwood then talked of mobilising sixteen sail of the royal navy besides Ralegh's eight, but that the envoy thought was too good to be true. Still he was hopeful. The next week, however, Lionello wrote that the scheme, so far at least as Ralegh was concerned, had fallen through. Without giving up his intention of sending naval assistance to Savoy, the King was resolved not to trust it to Ralegh's hands, mainly because his name would arouse too much opposition from Spain, but also because he could not be trusted with the plunder. So at least the ministers had told Scarnafissi. Lionello was not convinced. He believed that, once at sea, Ralegh would be found, after all, making for the Mediterranean.[1]

Gondomar, too, was of the same opinion, and was still unsatisfied. At the end of March, when Ralegh's fleet was practically ready for sea, he was still pressing for some definite assurance from the King.[2] To quiet him, James promised to procure from Ralegh an exact statement of his force and his destination, and to take security from him before he sailed that he would not change it. The King's engaging frankness as to Ralegh's objective could only suggest that he was intended to do something quite different, and the threat hung heavily over Spanish counsels. All December and January Count Ernest of Nassau's troops had been lying wind-bound in the Dutch ports, and the Ocean galleons had been hanging in the Straits looking for his sails to appear every hour. Then,

[1] Lionello's despatches are printed in Edwards's *Life of Ralegh*, i. 579.
[2] Buckingham to Winwood, March 28, 1617. *Buccleuch MSS.* (*Hist. MSS. Com.*) vol. i. p. 189.

in consequence, it was believed, of a sudden failure of heart at Count Ernest's strength, they had been recalled to Cadiz, but only to be ordered out again on news that the Hollanders on February 11 had actually sailed. The Ocean squadron was this time reinforced from the China and West Indian fleets. 'So much,' wrote the British agent at Madrid, 'do they take to heart the going of those forces out of Holland into Italy.' Two days later it was known that the Straits had been left open precisely at the wrong time, and that the whole of the Dutch fleet had passed in one by one.[1] Still the Spanish galleons were kept where they were in spite of urgent calls on them elsewhere. No reason appears. All we know is that Gondomar had not yet got the details of Ralegh's project from the King, and that it was not till a month later that it was thought safe to leave the Straits unguarded.[2]

There need scarcely have been so much anxiety. Ralegh had certainly abandoned the idea before he sailed. Perhaps he had never seriously entertained it. Lionello's despatches leave it uncertain whether the proposal came originally from Ralegh or Scarnafissi, but it is extremely improbable that the idea can have commended itself to the Elizabethan. There is no indication as yet that the leaders of English naval thought divined the great future that lay before them in the Mediterranean, and Ralegh himself, as we know from his own pen, did not believe that anything could be gained by supporting so insignificant a prince as the Duke of Savoy. For once his prophetic insight was at fault. He believed Savoy could never be more than a vassal to either France or Spain, and failing to appreciate the peculiar strategic and diplomatic strength of its position, he could not dream that it was to her that the most coveted prize of Christendom was to fall, and that one day a son of her house would

[1] *Carleton Letters*, pp. 96, 101. Cottington to Winwood, March 23, 1617, *Buccleuch MSS.* i. 187. According to De Jonghe, Nassau sailed on March 2, 1617 (n.s.) and arrived on April 4 (*Nederland in Venetie*, p. 69).

[2] 'Relacion de los navios de la Armada del Mar Oceano, &c.' in Duro's *Armada Española*, iii. 365.

sit on the throne of the Cæsars, with the Pope himself between his knees. It is therefore unlikely he ever entertained the idea favourably, and even if he did he probably rejected it on strategic grounds. Since his failures as an admiral he had devoted much time to the study of naval science, and he can hardly have missed detecting the weak point of the design. Sir William Monson, the last of the true Elizabethan admirals, shortly afterwards laid it down that the capture of Genoa was impossible without the previous acquisition of an advanced naval base in the Mediterranean, and there is no reason to believe that Ralegh was not sagacious enough to share this view. Further, it is now practically certain that if Ralegh was really bent on striking Spain a blow, it was in the way that naturally commended itself to a man of the Elizabethan school. During his last months in England he was undoubtedly considering an attack on the Spanish treasure fleet in concert with French privateers, and one of his chief captains was the notorious Sir John Fearne, who only five years before had been cruising off Cape St. Vincent at the head of a pirate squadron and consorting with the most active corsairs of the time.[1]

To be sure Ralegh's admirers will still dispute his piratical intentions, mainly, as it seems, because such things are now regarded as discreditable. But it was not so then. Such moves were at that time the stock-in-trade of foreign politics—no more to be reprehended than is a secret treaty now. We have seen how King James himself, merely to add weight to his diplomacy, could calmly consider the seizure and plunder of a friendly European port. It is even possible he was privy to Ralegh's communications with France. Ralegh, even in his last solemn declaration at the gate of death, did not deny that some such communication had been made. All he said was, 'I never had any plot or practice with the French directly or indirectly, nor with any other prince or state, unknown to the King.' Barneveld was pressing James to do something, as the Dutch themselves had done, to check the development of the great Catholic combination; and if

[1] *S. P. Dom.* lxv. 16, i. Examination of John Collever, July 5, 1611.

the worried King gave Ralegh orders not to annoy the Spaniards, it was only because Gondomar's overbearing personality wrung them from him. If Ralegh refused to treat the diplomatic prohibition as Drake used to do, it was rather because age, sorrow, and imprisonment had broken his spirit and destroyed his power of command, than because he did not think it right. There was excuse enough and to spare. Spain had been persistently violating the peace by treating every Englishman who appeared in American waters as an enemy. If he had made bold reprisal as Drake had done, no one would have blamed him, and least of all his own conscience. In any case it is certain that many of the men of most sound and sober judgment in England regarded it as an almost sacred duty to break James's faint-hearted peace and force on a renewal of the war before Spain had time to recover her strength. The old dog in the manger was showing herself incorrigible, and we must not forget it was the Reformation and the freedom of the New World that were at stake.

Still opinions will continue to differ on the ethics of these abortive projects. Yet, whatever we may think of them, they were innocence itself compared with the cup which the Spanish governors in Italy were even then brewing for Venice. In her Mediterranean policy Spain for the time seemed cowed by her inability to prevent the long-feared blow from the North. For all she could do it might be doubled and redoubled. No sooner indeed had Nassau's fleet sailed than the Venetian Ambassador at the Hague was applying to the States for another to transport three thousand more troops that Count Levenstein had raised in Germany for the Venetian service, and the British Ambassador by the King's orders was supporting his request.[1] It was clear that, with Venice thus free to renew her strength from the sea, Gradisca must fall. It was only a question of time and a long purse; and there was every prospect of the loss of the frontier fortress being followed by an expansion of the maritime republic, which would not only force back the

[1] *Carleton Letters*, pp. 96, 104, 145, 151, 162.

Austrian Hapsburgs permanently from the Adriatic, but would end perhaps in the partition of the Spanish province of Milan between Venice and Savoy. The Hapsburg system would thus be sundered by an impassable gulf. Before such an outlook the heart of Spain misgave her. Recoiling before the rising storm upon the policy of her superseded Viceroy, she began to devote all her energies to restoring the ignominious peace which, before her eyes were opened, she had been so eager to break. At all hazards the door must be closed against the unwelcome intrusion of the Northern sea powers, and the opportune mediation of the Pope gave her the chance of saving her face. The mediation was accepted. Plenipotentiaries from the four contending parties assembled at Madrid in the spring of 1618, and it was thus faintly that the new force first made itself felt in the Mediterranean.

CHAPTER V

ENGLAND AND THE VENICE CONSPIRACY

For Spain to cry peace was one thing. For her viceroys to listen was another. Of all the mysteries of Italian history there is none more dramatic or more difficult to probe in all its dark recesses than what is known in Venice as the Spanish Conspiracy. Yet there is one broad feature in it that stands out clearly enough. Although it is one that in the fascination of more melodramatic details has been generally overlooked, it is nevertheless the only point in the strange incredible story which had a lasting significance. From out of the crowd of cloaked conspirators, the fevered riding to and fro, and the cries of tortured men, rises again the hand that beckoned England to her destinies in the Midland Sea. In her jeopardy Venice cried to England for her ships, and this time England heard.

The famous conspiracy is now recognised to have had two main aspects—the one, within Venice itself, akin to our own Gunpowder Plot, with mysterious strangers crowding the low taverns, whispers of secret stores of explosives, and sudden, silent executions—the other out in the Adriatic, where Osuna's new fleet was boldly challenging the ancient claims of the island city, preying on her commerce, and attacking her fleets. It was Osuna who lived in Venetian story as the ringleader of the whole plot, and his piratical familiar, Jacques Pierre, who was believed to have been its instigator. It was natural enough. For it was in Osuna's declared policy of winning the sea, and in the fleet which, with the Norman corsair's help, he had at length created that the real danger lay, and not in the brainless bravos who, as

they found to their cost, were but children in the hands of the Venetian police.

Early in the year 1617, when Ralegh's destination was still uncertain and Osuna had heard of Nassau's Dutch squadron that was on the point of sailing, no one knew whither, he had written to the King at Madrid saying that he would send the few ships he could get ready into the Adriatic to be on the look out; but, so as not to compromise the home Government, they should sail under his own private flag on pretence of cruising for pirates. On the same pretext he said he was seeking permission to buy some ships in France. At the same time he pointed out the importance of the rule of concentration, which Drake had forced on the English Government in 1588, and begged that Santa-Cruz's squadron, which was then lying at Gibraltar, might be ordered to join Ribera at Brindisi. It is possible that it was at this time that his ambitious mind conceived the idea of making his master supreme in the Western Mediterranean by the seizure of Venice. At all events it is certain that on April 1 some such scheme was occupying his mind. He had heard the Venetians had sent out a squadron to meet their Dutch auxiliaries, of whom as yet he had no certain news, and he was writing to the King to explain how he was concentrating all the galleys and ships he could lay hands on to prevent the junction. He did not doubt the Gibraltar galleons would follow the Dutch if they passed, so as to join hands with his own admiral Ribera, and then all would be well. If the King would only place the matter in his hands with supreme command, he would undertake, he said, to make him master of the state and seas of Venice. All he asked was ten of the seventeen galleons which Santa-Cruz had at Gibraltar, if no more could be spared, and a free hand, and then with the Italian galleys and his own galleons he would undertake that Venice should trouble Spain no more.

Meanwhile he ordered Ribera to Brindisi with eleven galleons, and directed the galleys to join him there. But long before they were ready the Venetian Gulf squadron appeared off the port and blockaded Ribera while the

Dutch transports and their attendant warships passed in. Nothing daunted, however, Osuna pursued his purpose. Ribera was ordered back to Messina to effect a concentration with the Italian galleys and the Spanish galleons he expected from Gibraltar. But instead of the galleons came a despatch from the King in disapproval of his proposals. The design on Venice, he was assured, was an excellent idea, but unfortunately the Ocean galleons could not be spared. The Spanish seas were so thick with pirates of all nations that every available ship was needed to protect the coasts and the ocean trade. No other answer was possible. For, to add to all the other anxieties, it was just when Ralegh was on the point of leaving England, and every Spaniard believed he was going to turn pirate too. But this was not the worst that Osuna had to bear. He had also to learn that, in the face of her helplessness to resist the new naval pressure, Spain could no longer support the wars of her viceroys and had accepted the Pope's mediation. Peace negotiations, as we have seen, were about to open at Madrid, and, for fear of impeding them, there came an order to Osuna that he was not on any account to allow his fleet to enter the Adriatic. Here was a heavy check to all his dreams. His ships and galleys were at last ready to sail, the troops were on board, and there was the King's order undoing all he had done. But Osuna was not yet beaten. He had not been humbled as yet, like Ralegh, with years of sorrow and imprisonment. Success and popularity had fixed his confidence. He knew what the naval situation demanded, and his masterful nature was not so easily thwarted by the wretched crew of politicians who surrounded his almost imbecile sovereign. He vowed, so the Venetian agent reported, that he would send his fleet into the Gulf in despite of the world, in despite of the King, and in despite of God. In such a temper an excuse for disobedience is seldom far to seek. It happened that the objectionable order was not in cypher as usual, and there he saw his way. So he calmly sat down and wrote to his master to inform him of the prohibition he had received, saying that as it was not in cypher he had no

doubt it was a forgery, and therefore he was sending his whole force into the Gulf of Venice as originally ordered.

Meanwhile Nassau's troops had landed in Venice, and the combined Venetian and Dutch fleet had returned and struck an offensive blow before Osuna could move. The only weak point in the Venetian command of the Adriatic was at this time the sea power of the ancient city of Ragusa and the other Dalmatian ports, where the old nobility of Albania and the neighbouring countries, flying before the Turkish conquests, had established themselves in a kind of piratical independence and were known as the Uscocchi. It was in these men and in the Republic of Ragusa that the house of Austria sought an instrument to sap the Venetian dominion on the sea. Indeed it was to the Archduke Ferdinand's encouragement of the Uscocchi that the existing war was mainly due, and in concert with Osuna he was credited with an intention of bringing them into line for the threatened blow at Venice. As an answer to the move the Venetian admiral, Veniero, had seized a small port close to Ragusa, and there the Gulf squadron had taken up its station as though with the intention of establishing a base from which the obnoxious neutral port could be seized, or at least rendered impotent. Thither, therefore, Osuna ordered his fleet so soon as the bulk of it was ready. The movement resulted in a mere reconnaissance. The Gulf squadron being inferior refused an action, and Osuna's admirals, finding it was expecting reinforcements, fell back to Brindisi to pick up the remainder of their force. In July they returned, but again the Venetians refused an action in the open and retired to Lessina. Here an engagement took place. It was quite indecisive, an artillery duel at long range; but, while Ribera blockaded the Venetians with his galleons, his galleys were able to intercept two of the famous *galeazze di mercantia* with their priceless cargoes. Though Ribera could not retain his station and was compelled to return to Brindisi, the affair was heralded as a victory, and Osuna claimed to have a set-off against Veniero's blockade of his own fleet at Brindisi, and to have successfully challenged the

Venetian claim to the *mare clausum*. As a matter of fact the campaign had been a strategical success for the Venetians. They had covered the siege of Gradisca, retained their position against Ragusa, and were still in practical command of the Gulf, in so far as it was closed as a channel for reinforcements for the Archduke, and open for the support of their own operations in Carniola.

Still Osuna could be well content. Even the Spanish Court were coming round to his views. In answer to the objectionable order, he had presented them with an accomplished fact, and instead of a reprimand he had received directions, quite in the elastic modern style, to protect Spanish interests in the Adriatic. It was an authority wide enough to excuse any violent measures that might prove successful, and he prepared for a new effort. The darkest part of the work was already well in hand. After mysterious overtures to the Venetian Ambassador at Naples, Jacques Pierre with a few kindred spirits had pretended to desert Osuna's service and had escaped to Venice. The Frenchman's unnatural eagerness to transfer his talents to the flag of St. Mark aroused some suspicion. He was not at once employed, but by pretending to betray Osuna's designs he retained his liberty, and was able to tamper with the adventurous rascality that was found in abundance among the Venetian hired troops and seamen. His idea appears to have been to raise at the favourable moment a military and perhaps a naval revolt; and so, as soon as the Neapolitan fleet was signalled, to turn against the Venetians the foreign mercenaries on whom they were relying. Though silently watched, he was meeting with no small success, and all was going well when Osuna was staggered by a peremptory order from Madrid to remove the whole of his ships instantly from the Adriatic. Instead of attacking Venice he was to pick up the stores and provisions he had gathered at Messina for the grand design, and to send them on to the Marquis of Santa-Cruz at Genoa. To add to his disgust he found at the same moment that his galley admiral had left Ribera in the lurch and brought all his vessels round to Messina without orders, unless they

were some he had received direct from the Court. Osuna was furious. He wrote in hot protest to the King, not sparing to demonstrate the madness of the move to Genoa, which would leave the Venetians free to use their fleet against the Archduke and the Uscocchi, and expose the whole of the Neapolitan and Sicilian waters to the mercy of the Turks and corsairs. Still he would obey if he could, but he feared it was quite possible that, as Ribera had now no galleys to tow his ships, the weather might prevent them getting out of the Adriatic in time to be of use. But his protests and his cunning were alike useless. Spain had no choice. The horizon beyond the Pyrenees had grown so threatening that at any moment it seemed that the whole weight of France might be thrown into the scale of Savoy; and to Genoa, threatened as she already was from the North Sea, must go all the strength Philip could scrape together. It was a situation which Spain had never had to face before. She was wholly unprepared to meet the double danger. There was but one way of escape. The Plenipotentiaries at Madrid hastily completed their work, and in September peace was signed between Spain, the Empire, Venice, and Savoy.

It was a peace no one believed in; Europe was too obviously on the eve of a universal conflagration. Ferdinand, whose savage persecution of his subjects had more than justified his education as the nurtured champion of the Jesuits, had been elected King of Protestant Bohemia. It was the throne to which the Elector Palatine, the most fiery representative of the Reformation militant, had always aspired with James's support to lift his English bride, and Ferdinand, as heir to all the Austrian dominions and practically Emperor elect, was as much by his position as his fanatic character the real head of the Catholic combination. So the glove was already thrown down. Every one was arming and every one scheming to secure a better position before the trumpets sounded.

To Spain the peace brought no relief from the special anxiety that was breathing upon her out of the Northern

seas. Indeed it was taking a new form that the peace was likely to aggravate rather than assuage. She had shown herself wholly unable to police effectively the great commercial routes that lay within her particular sphere of action, and both England and Holland, into whose hands was falling a continually increasing share of both the Levant and the Indian trade, were evincing an ominous disposition to do the work themselves. A Dutch squadron under Evertsen, we have seen, had already been causing anxiety as to its intentions on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, and more drastic and extensive measures were on foot in Holland. In England the King, under pressure from the Levant and East Indian merchants, had appointed a royal Commission to inquire into the best method of breaking the power of the Barbary corsairs, and out of it came the first faint germ of the British Mediterranean Squadron. At the end of April 1617, when the Spanish Council was first considering Osuna's startling proposal, the Commission, after taking the evidence of the most experienced merchants and sea-captains available, had made its report. The main questions were whether or not the work should be undertaken in concert with Spain, and whether it were better to attempt the seizure of Algiers by a *coup de main* or to maintain a permanent squadron in the Mediterranean until the corsairs were hounded from the sea. The captains were unanimous in declaring Algiers impregnable to surprise, and in recommending a permanent squadron. They were equally unanimous in declining to act with Spaniards, or indeed with any nation except the Dutch, and they strongly advised that the assistance of the King of Spain should be confined to a contribution of money and the use of his ports, which they declared essential to the scheme as advanced bases. The Commission endorsed their ideas, and when a month later Sir John Digby went as special ambassador to Spain with the marriage treaty in one hand, this was the peppery dish he carried in the other.

Nothing could well have been more repellent to the Spanish palate. An expedition against the Barbary

corsairs had become the stock diplomatic formula for covering some ulterior and sinister design. Osuna had been and was still using it without so much as a smile, and to the Court of Spain Digby's proposals can have been read as nothing less than the threat of a naval demonstration to quicken its interest in James's marriage proposals. But in fact they had the appearance of something worse. The man who was at the back of the merchants in their pressure upon the English Government was Essex's old companion in arms, the Earl of Southampton. For us he lives as Shakespeare's far-sighted patron; but then he stood for that irresponsible and romantic policy of hot aggression against Spain which Essex had personified, and which we should now perhaps call 'jingoism.' To Gondomar there was no doubt of what such a leader meant. He wrote to his Government that the adventurous noble was bent, by means of war with Spain, on dethroning the Earl of Nottingham from where he sat as King Log of the navy, in order that he might reign in his stead, and that under the cloak of Algiers he was bent on a new attempt upon Genoa.

For Spain there was nothing to do but make the best of the situation, and, with as good a face as she could assume, she entered into negotiations for an international effort against the corsairs. But it is not surprising to find that, so soon as the negotiations were on foot, the Spanish Government, which, as we know, had been hanging back from Osuna's adventure, was once more encouraging its intractable viceroy. Disgusted with the peace which frustrated his half-finished designs against Venice, and distracted with contradictory orders, Osuna had begged for leave of absence for himself, and for definite instructions for his fleet.[1] His ships were again in the Adriatic; for, on report that Levenstein and his three thousand Germans were on the point of sailing, he had promptly ordered it back to Brindisi. Meanwhile the Government at Madrid had received definite information that, in spite of the peace, Levenstein had sailed with eleven powerful

[1] October 13, 1617, *Doc. Inéd.* xlvi. 130.

ships, under the command of the Dutch admiral, Hildebrant Quast. As a matter of fact, an effort had been made by the Venetian agent at the Hague to stop him as he passed down Channel, but the order came just two days too late.[1] Of this the Spaniards were probably ignorant, and it was resolved that Osuna should be told to maintain the attitude he had taken up. He was, however, to use the greatest discretion, so as not to endanger the peace; while as for leave of absence the King himself wrote in flattering terms approving his zeal and saying that he could not be spared from his post.[2] A fortnight later he was definitely informed that he might prevent the Venetians permanently establishing themselves in their new station near Ragusa, but it must be done under his own flag and not the King's.

Before this despatch was received Ribera had been in collision with the Venetians. By Osuna's orders he had already taken his fifteen galleons up to Ragusa to watch their fleet. Whereupon, according to Ribera, the Venetian admiral had put to sea with eighteen galleons, twenty-eight galleys, and six galleasses, and attacked him without any provocation. The weather was fine enough, says Ribera, for both tiers of guns to be used, and a sharp action ensued. He was to leeward, and awaited the Venetian attack, which was made in their old crescent formation. Of his own tactics he says nothing except that he soon forced the oared ships to back hurriedly out of action, and that, on his concentrating his fire upon the enemy's flag galleon, the whole Venetian force retired. The Venetians denied that the provocation came from them, nor did they admit the victory which Ribera reported. He again claimed to have established command of the Gulf, but the admitted fact is that a storm prevented the renewal of the action and that Ribera was forced to run for shelter back to Brindisi, where before long he found himself once more blockaded by what he described as a mixed fleet of Venetian, Dutch, and English vessels under the flag of St. Mark. It is quite possible, as we

[1] *Carleton Letters*, pp. 163, 195.

[2] November 29, 1617. Duro, *Osuna e su marina: Appendix.*

shall see, that some English Levant merchantmen did actually form part of the Venetian admiral's force, and these vessels, owing to the dangerous condition of the seas through which they had to pass, were armed and equipped in all respects like men-of-war. Indeed, by both Spaniards and Italians, they were usually spoken of as galleons.

From this ignominious position it was necessary for Osuna to extricate his admiral with all speed. Definite though exaggerated news had just reached him that Levenstein with fifteen galleons had left Holland for Venice at the end of October, besides four transports that were to follow, and there was every prospect of his being as powerless to prevent their entering the Adriatic as he had been before. For this time the enemy was armed to the teeth, and, instead of stealing by as Nassau's ships had done, Levenstein was ready to fight his way through in a compact fleet.[1] Again, therefore, Osuna cried to the King for help—for the return of the four galleons he had been compelled to detach as transports to fetch his troops back from Lombardy—for seven or eight of the galleons of the Ocean Guard—for the squadron of the galleys of Spain. With these he was certain he could deal a blow to Venice and its fleet which would give his master rest for many a day to come. But instead of help came fresh causes of anxiety. His plot against Venice was fast ripening. Jacques Pierre was making good progress. In August he had obtained an engagement to serve the Venetian State. Though he received no definite commission it was a great step forward, and Osuna was growing desperate. He wanted to have everything ready by April 1618, yet he could not get so much as a definite order from Spain, and his colleague in Sicily refused to co-operate with either ships or galleys. Appeal after appeal went off to Madrid as his difficulties increased, till, in the closing days of the year 1617, the last blow came and he heard that the Venetians had not only applied for leave to charter a squadron of twelve warships in Holland, but had sent a similar application to England.

[1] *Carleton Letters*, p. 163.

So long as he had only the Dutch to deal with he might hope to be strong enough still to carry out his project; but with both the new sea powers combining to save the old one, his grand scheme began to look almost hopeless. Weary of warning his Government, he lost all patience and took the bit between his teeth. Without so much as seeking the consent of the ministers he so deeply despised he took his own line, and began to act with all the airs of an independent prince. To the Archduke and to Spinola in Flanders he wrote off to urge them to charter for him in Holland a squadron of twelve of the largest and most heavily armed ships they could get; to Gondomar in London, to charter him eight of the renowned English merchantmen; and finally to King James himself, begging him not to refuse to the King of Spain what he had granted to the Venetians.[1]

There was need enough for haste. The Venetians were indeed at work in England, and with so much vigour that by January 20, 1618, they had received the necessary permission. In Holland they had had equal success. They had hoped, it is true, to get eight of the Dutch navy ships, but this the Government had refused on the ground that they were themselves fitting out a fleet of twenty sail against the pirates; but they allowed them to hire twelve merchant ships fitted for war, with the option of purchase.[2] By February people were ready to name the man who was to command the British contingent. Ostensibly an Italian was to be at its head, but this was only to save appearances. The real commander was to be an Englishman; some said Sir Henry Peyton, a favourite officer of Sir Horace Vere,[3] and some Captain Henry Mainwaring, a famous gentleman pirate, who had recently come in on a promise of pardon from the King.

He was a man entirely representative of his class—the well-born adventurers whose restless spirits or broken

[1] An Italian version of this letter is among Lord Calthorpe's MSS. (*Hist. MSS. Com.* ii. 456) vol. cxlvi. f. 312; a Spanish version in *Documentos Inéditos*, xlvi. 271, dated Naples, Jan. 1, 1618.

[2] *Carleton Letters*, pp. 232, 235, 245.

[3] *Domestic Calendar*, 1613, p. 212.

fortunes had driven them, upon the cessation of the war with Spain, to find employment upon the high seas or in the service of the Barbary states. A member of one of the oldest families in England—the Mainwarings of Peover, in Cheshire—he had taken to piracy—so he assured the King—more by accident than design. Details of his piratical career are wanting, but it was certainly during the period when the English pirate leaders, under treaty with the Sultan of Morocco, had established a kind of base at Mamora or Mehdia, at the mouth of the Sebu river, just north of Salee. Ever since Fajardo's successful attack on the Goleta at Tunis, it had become their principal haunt.[1] In less than two years, according to a report made in 1611 by Sir Ferdinand Gorges, Governor of Plymouth, there were some forty sail of English pirates, with two thousand men, using the port and cruising in two main squadrons, under Sir John Fearne and a Captain Peter Croston or Kaston.[2] Mainwaring's name does not appear among the captains. Indeed, he had probably not yet taken to the trade; for, from a farewell ode written in his honour, it would appear that he did not sail from England till January 1613, when he set out with the intention of accompanying Sir Robert Shirley on his last embassy to Persia.[3] What the accident was that made him change diplomacy for piracy we do not know; but if we may believe his own report, he took so kindly to the new profession that he must soon have risen to a position which made him supreme at Mehdia. While he was there, he said, there were thirty sail of corsairs frequenting the place, and he would not allow one of them to go either in or out without their giving an engagement not to touch English vessels. Furthermore, he made a treaty with the Salee Moriscos, by which all their Christian prisoners were released, and he made it his business to rescue all English vessels he found in 'Turkish' hands and protect them from moles-

[1] See Osuna's report, June 2, 1618, *Doc. Inéd.* xlvi. 411.

[2] *S. P. Domestic*, lxv. 16, July 4, 1611.

[3] See the *Muses' Sacrifice*, by John Davies of Hereford, 1612. It would appear that, in 1614, Mainwaring's name was famous as a pirate as far as Caithness. See *Sir W. Monson's Voyage* in that year; *Churchill*, iii. 246.

tation. Several 'Turkish' corsairs he actually captured, he says, one of which had been as high up the Thames as the Lea. He also claims to have made an arrangement with Tunis, by which British ships were to be exempt from its depredations, and he says the Bey had eaten bread and salt with him, and offered him half shares of all prizes and the freedom of his religion if he would enter his service. So great was his reputation that he claimed to have received similar invitations from the Dukes of Savoy and Guise and from the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Spain, too, he tells us, finding herself unable to deal otherwise with the situation, approached him through the Duke of Medina-Sidonia with the offer of a pardon and a high command if he would betray Mehdia into Spanish hands. One midsummer day in the last year of his service, he tells us that with only two ships he fought five Spaniards all day and then beat them off, and thereupon received from Spain an offer of twenty thousand ducats a year to take command of the Andalusian squadron. But he was not to be tempted, and his depredations continued; nor was it till the Spaniards began to suspect that the Dutch had designs on Mehdia that they found energy to destroy his nest. Then, as we have seen, Fajardo with an overpowering force captured the place and made it a Spanish port. Whether Mainwaring was present at the time is not known, but as the place made practically no resistance it is probable that most of the leading corsairs were away cruising. It is even possible that, after all, Mainwaring arranged with Fajardo that they should be. At all events it was the end of his career as a Barbary corsair. The following year he was hovering in the North Sea while his friends negotiated his pardon, and early in 1616 they had succeeded in so far assuring it that he was back in England settling claims with men he had robbed.[1]

[1] *Domestic Calendar*, 1611–18, pp. 298, 342, 353, 359. See also his *Discourse on Pirates* (signed 'Henry Maynnaringe'), *Brit. Mus. Reg.* 17, A. xlvii. Another copy is among the MSS. of Sir P. T. Mainwaring at Peover, *Hist. MSS. Com.* x. iv. 202. The copy in the Royal MSS. is probably that presented to the King. It is a very beautiful piece of caligraphy, elaborately illuminated, and it is interesting to note that it may

If half he tells of himself is true, the reappearance of such a man in the Mediterranean with the official sanction of the British Government could only be viewed with the liveliest apprehension in Spain. It is no wonder then that the news of what was going on in England caused a profound sensation at Madrid. The Council of State was at its wit's end. It took them a week of anxious deliberation and prolonged debates before they could make up their minds what to reply to Osuna. Their last order to him had been to maintain his position; but in the face of the new difficulty their hearts once more began to fail them, and though at first some members were inclined to support his action they eventually changed their minds. The resolution they finally came to was that Osuna must be told it was useless to pursue his project against Venice. It was certain that in case of need the princes of Germany, the King of England, and the Dutch would come to her assistance; and as for disputing her claim to the Adriatic, Spain was not in a position to make war for such an object. True, Osuna had said he could maintain such a war for six months from his own resources; but it was now clear that, long before six months expired, the Venetians would have obtained assistance which would enable them to prolong hostilities for years. He must therefore give up all idea of coercing the Republic and remove his ships from Brindisi. They assured him that the object for which he had sent them there was no longer possible, for they had certain news that Levenstein had already passed in. To keep his ships where they were could do nothing but excite suspicion and foster that interference of the Northern powers which Spain wished particularly to avoid. To add to his vexation these orders were followed by a reprimand for his having presumed to correspond directly with a foreign prince, and by a pious rebuke for seeking help of heretics. Such paltriness brought the King the rough answer it deserved. 'They are not going to preach but to fight for you,' he said, and hotly justified all he had done. His anger availed him

be the work of the converted pirate's own hand, since John Davies, who addressed him as his favourite pupil, was a writing-master.

nothing. He was bluntly told to refit ten of his ships and send them to Gibraltar as a guard for the Straits.[1]

It was not likely that the Viceroy's ambition would allow him tamely to submit to such orders which at a blow would wreck all his schemes. They were fast coming to a head. Those mysterious strangers were already swarming in the Venetian taverns; Jacques Pierre was darkly at work among Levenstein's troops; and the hour of the Republic was at hand. In desperation Osuna pointed out to the King the madness of abandoning the Adriatic to his arch-enemy at such a moment, when so much had been done. He was sure the King could not have heard the news from England and Holland when his last orders were penned, and he had therefore taken on himself to delay their execution till he heard again. The orders were repeated, and so was his protest. So sure was he that they must be mistaken in Madrid about the fleets that were coming from the North that he had ventured still to delay the recall of his fleet from Brindisi, and even to reinforce it with four more ships he had been hastily equipping at Naples. This was on May 8. In three weeks' time would be the great gala day at Venice, when her dominion over the Adriatic was celebrated by the annual ceremony in which the Doge went out in the great 'Bucentoro' to wed the Sea. Strangers from all lands were flocking then as now to see the pageant. The installation of a new and wealthy Doge happened to coincide with the world-famed festival. Venice had never been gayer and more crowded, and yet in the throngs of tourists and revellers there was a sinister element so numerous that it could not be entirely concealed. It was no wonder that Osuna was anxious and excited as the long prepared moment approached, and that he tore more fiercely than ever at the reins that were checking his restiveness from Madrid.

There they knew well enough all that Osuna knew, but for them it was a reason for drawing back and not for pressing on. As long before as March 21, Gondomar had

[1] *Documentos Inéditos*, Feb. 10, 14, 1618, vol. xlvi. 277 *et seq.* Duro, *Osuna e su Marina: Appendix*, Feb. 17, April 14.

sent them full particulars of the danger that was threatening. In Holland twelve ships of war under Admiral Melchior van den Kerkhoven with two thousand men were almost ready for sea, and in a month seven of the finest English merchantmen would sail to join them at Plymouth.[1] Besides these there were at least two other English ships which the Venetian Ambassador had chartered, and which were already in the Mediterranean. Gondomar was using his utmost efforts to thwart the Venetian action, but he knew he would not be able to stop the squadron sailing any more than he had been able to stop Ralegh. The Venetian Ambassador had been ordered to get the vessels off with the greatest possible speed, regardless of cost, and he had nearly half a million ducats at his disposal. Every English ship would carry besides its seamen seventy soldiers, and it was said the Low Country officer, Sir Henry Peyton, would command them. Gondomar could not get at the King. Buckingham, who was then all-powerful and violently anti-Spanish, would not let him. So there was no hope and they must prepare for the worst.[2]

That King James, for all his nervous caution, could permit such an expedition to be organised in his territory was scarcely less significant than if he had fitted out a squadron from the royal navy. It was impossible to read it otherwise than as a demonstration of where he meant to draw the line between peace and war. The Spanish

[1] De Jonghe, *Nederland in Venetie*, p. 86. They sailed from the Texel May 18, 1618.

[2] The schedule of ships which Gondomar sent included details of their crews, tonnage, armament, and rate of hiring. They were as follows:—

	Tons.	Guns.
In England:		
'The Centurion'	250	26
'The Dragon'	270	26
'The Abigail'	250	26
'The Devil of Dunkirk'	250	26
'The Hercules'	300	28
'The Mathew'	330	28
'The Royal Exchange'	400	32
At Leghorn:		
'The Southampton'	230	30
The Merchant Royal'	450	32

Documentos Inéditos, xlvi. 374.

Government were face to face at last with the prospect of an English fleet in the Mediterranean, acting in concert with the Dutch, the Venetians, and probably, as they thought, the Barbary corsairs; and whatever may have been their complicity in Osuna's schemes they knew it was time to drop them. It was this that had brought to the chafing Viceroy order after order to quit the Adriatic, and to remove his fleet from his own port at Brindisi, and it was this that had earned him the reprimand for writing directly to the English Court. Nothing could have been more ill-timed than his application to James for permission to hire ships. It had served no purpose but to give the shifty King a complete answer to Gondomar's protests. In reply to his importunity the baffled Ambassador could get nothing better than an assurance that he too might hire ships if his master wanted them. To this the Spaniards had no retort, and the only hope of stopping the unwelcome intrusion was to persuade the Venetians, by a complete evacuation of the Adriatic, that it was unnecessary for them to seek English assistance.

But, severely as his Government was pressing him, Osuna could not bring himself to abandon the fruit of so much labour, as it hung almost within his reach. His reinforced fleet was at Brindisi ready to sail, the taverns of Venice were swollen with his agents. Apparently unsuspicious of her impending doom, her revels grew higher and higher, and every day Osuna expected from Madrid the word that would free his hand. Nearly a month before, Jacques Pierre had warned him that his procrastination was ruining their chances, and two days later the Frenchman's activity was stopped by his being ordered aboard the fleet with his most dangerous confederate. Still no word came from Madrid. On May 18 Osuna wrote again more urgently than ever. He had heard directly from Gondomar, and from the Governor of the Spanish Netherlands, that the English and Dutch ships were on the point of sailing, and waited in confidence for the answer.

But already it was too late. The very day he penned the letter, as Venice awoke for another day's festivity, there

was a sight in the Piazzetta that sent a shiver through every heart. On the gibbet between the famous columns were two corpses, and each hung by the leg in token that their crime was treason. While the horror was still fresh another body was added, this time awry with the marks of torture. No one could tell what it meant. They only knew that suddenly all those sinister strangers had disappeared as mysteriously as they had assembled, and no one knew how. There were whispers of boats full of bodies, and dull splashes in the canals in the dead of night, and in the fleet Jacques Pierre and his confederate were swiftly put to death. The day for the fantastic marriage came, and the people assembled to celebrate it, but gloomily with anxious murmurs of some horrible danger narrowly escaped. Yet it had been escaped, and the wedding took place in all its splendour. The Doge was still lord of his bride, Osuna's fleet remained motionless at Brindisi, and a week later he was writing to say he had ordered Ribera to withdraw.[1]

To this hour the 'Spanish Conspiracy' remains a mystery. Its ramifications have baffled the historians of all countries. The parts of France, of Spain, of Osuna, and of Don Pedro de Toledo at Milan, are all uncertain. Yet all seemed to have a part. We know the ringleaders of the bravos in Venice were French, that some of them had been in Osuna's service, and their chief his most familiar instrument; we know that they were in communication with him and the Spanish Ambassador at Venice, that they expected an attack from Osuna's fleet, and that Osuna intended to make one at the moment they were prepared to act. But what the connection was no man can say. Probability would seem to suggest that the plot in Venice itself was some wild scheme concocted by mere desperadoes with a vague idea of mending their fortunes; that Osuna knew of it and fostered it through Don Pedro and Jacques Pierre so far as he saw in it an opportunity of coming in like a *deus ex machina* with his fleet, and making himself master of the situation; and that

[1] Duro, *Osuna e su Marina: Appendix*, May 30. For the best English account of the 'Spanish Conspiracy,' see Horatio Brown, *Venetian Studies*.

the Spanish Government were prepared to shut their eyes to what he was doing so long as it did not involve them in too great a danger. And herein lies the abiding interest of the melodramatic story. Until the Venetian Ambassador with King James's assent began hiring ships on the London Exchange, the Spanish Government had let Osuna go on. Then it became clear, not only that the English King would not permit the old strategic centre to pass under Spanish control, but that he knew he had the means to protect it in a way there was no resenting. Then it was that Spain drew back and was able to hold her turbulent officer long enough for Venice not only to crush treachery in her bosom but to provide herself with a force upon the sea against which Osuna was powerless. So to all the strange aspects of that famous plot we must add one more, and see in it the first occasion on which England by her new sea power laid a mastering hand upon the old centres of dominion and had dimly revealed to her her most potent line of political action.

CHAPTER VI

THE NAVY UNDER JAMES I.

At first sight it may appear that too much importance has been attached to the apparently insignificant aid which James permitted the Venetians to obtain from his marine. To modern eyes the little squadron of merchant vessels, which came at the call of Venice in her hour of trial, must appear scarcely worth lifting from the oblivion into which it has fallen. Yet a clear apprehension of the idea of naval power which then prevailed will show that to the men of that time the sailing of those forgotten ships must have had a very deep significance. To begin with, it must be borne in mind that first-class merchantmen still formed an integral and recognised part of the national navy. Sailing war-fleets in all countries were usually more than half made up of armed merchant ships. It had even been the policy of the British Government, as well as of others, to foster the production of such vessels as composed the little squadron by a tonnage bounty, with the express intention that they should constitute an auxiliary fleet. For centuries such vessels had occupied in the scheme of national defence a similar place to that which was held by county militia ashore. As yet the system had shown no signs of falling into disfavour, but rather the reverse. In the last year of Elizabeth a scheme had been worked out under which the defence of the home waters was to be left almost entirely to squadrons of private men-of-war, in order that the whole royal navy might be set free for an untrammelled and far-reaching offensive, and, as the young Osuna had seen, the war would have gained a new and irresistible impetus had not James brought it to so abrupt and premature a

conclusion. It was therefore no mere filibustering expedition that had been on foot. In sanctioning the employment of first-class merchantmen by the Venetian Government, the King was deliberately parting with a section of his maritime force in order to protect an ally, and thereby preserve the balance of power in the Mediterranean.

Nor was this all. It might be said that, so far as the check to Spain was due to naval pressure, it was due to the action of the Dutch rather than to that of England. Indeed, they were rapidly outstripping their mistress in the naval art, and it is possible that at that moment their naval power was as great as hers. Ever since the last years of Elizabeth the royal navy had been declining in strength and temper; but it is by no means clear that this was generally known. England's prestige, as far as we can judge, stood as high as ever, and upon this she had been living. The fleet was one of the great sights of the country. Every foreign tourist of distinction went down to Rochester to see the royal ships, and wrote home glowing accounts of their numbers, strength, and splendour. The King held naval reviews in the sight of shouting thousands, and none but the keenest eye could tell that all was not as well as ever. But even if the real state of things was not fully known abroad, it mattered little, for by this time it was fully known at home, and the most threatening aspect of the little squadron that James had sanctioned was that its organisation coincided with a serious revival in England. It is therefore probable that the moral effect of the English demonstration had at least as much weight with the Mediterranean powers as the actual force exhibited by the Dutch.

If we were to seek for the point at which the navy began definitely to decline, we should probably find it about the time when death withdrew from it the influence of Hawkins and the old seamen admirals. It was then that, under men like Essex and Southampton, the navy became the fashion and fell into the hands of 'Society.' With a mere fine gentleman like Fulke Greville succeeding Hawkins, it was not likely that, however good and up-

right the new Treasurer's intentions might be, the seeds of corruption, which the old Plymouth captain had fought so long and astutely, should not begin to sprout anew. Nor from the Earl of Nottingham, the old Lord Admiral, was any assistance to be expected. With advancing years lethargy had crept fast upon him. When the peace was signed he was nearly seventy—a ripe old age as men went then—and his portrait shows senility stamped on every feature. In his best days as Lord Howard of Effingham his lofty personality and unblemished devotion had given the country the power of welding into an irresistible weapon all the fierce and unruly elements of her sea power. As the nominal head of her sea-bred captains his services were priceless. But neither as a seaman nor as an administrator was there anything very definite to his record. In the Great Armada year, on which his reputation mainly rests, his plan of campaign had been superseded by that of Drake, and he had been practically ordered to place his main fleet at his Vice-Admiral's disposal. In the actual fighting he had been chiefly distinguished by blundering unsupported into the middle of the Spanish fleet, and by his inexcusable turning aside from the crucial attack at Gravelines. During the greater part of his administration, moreover, the navy had been practically managed by Lord Burghley and Hawkins, and so soon as their hands were removed it began to go down hill. As early as 1596 the expedition to Cadiz had demonstrated that the decay of his mental and physical qualities rendered Nottingham unfit for active command, and the condition of the fleet in the following year said as little for his powers of administration. A man always susceptible of being dominated by any strong personality with which he came in contact, he soon became but a child in the hands of the worthless men who succeeded in winning his confidence. The result was a rapid deterioration of the navy in every aspect, and all attempts to check it he querulously opposed. Convinced of the purity and loftiness of his own conduct, he would not believe that any man whose fortunes he had pushed could be less devoted than himself. To make matters

more difficult, the worst offenders were connections of his own, and his belief in his order and in his family, in which the command of the navy had become almost hereditary, was sacred and inflexible. The result was an inevitable nepotism, but a nepotism so honest that he took any reflection on the general administration of the service as a personal attack. To remove him was the only hope for reform, and his position was practically unassailable. A great nobleman of lofty descent and venerable figure, he stood like a personification of Elizabethan glory, a last and cherished link with the heroic age; and it was not till Buckingham rose to his almost unprecedented position as a favourite that a force was found strong enough to drag the old Lord Admiral from his seat. For fifteen years after Elizabeth's death he remained an unwitting cloak to every disease that can infect a navy.

His evil genius and the main cause of all the trouble was Sir Robert Mansell, who stands without a rival in our naval history for malversation in his office. An officer of the new school, he was a gentleman of good family who had chosen the navy as a career from his youth, and the record of his service afloat was at least respectable. Though distantly connected with the Lord Admiral, he was one of Essex's men and had been knighted at Cadiz in 1596, though in what capacity he served is unknown. The following year he was captain of Essex's flag-ship during the Azores expedition, and afterwards was serving as his admiral on the Irish station. An accomplished courtier, he managed to survive the fall of his patron, and Nottingham's influence and devotion to the interests of his kinsmen was enough to keep him employed. When Nottingham's son-in-law, Leveson, was serving as Admiral of the Narrow Seas, Mansell was appointed his vice-admiral, and when Leveson in 1602 was given the command of the main fleet, Mansell succeeded him in the Channel. While he was so serving it had fallen to his lot to concert with the Dutch admiral a combined attempt to prevent Frederigo Spinola's second attempt to pass the Straits of Dover with a galley squadron,

and the success of the operation had brought him some distinction. It was at all events enough for the Lord Admiral's influence and his own good looks to secure him the treasurership of the navy when Sir Fulke Greville retired in the first year of the new King's reign. The energy and power with which John Hawkins had filled the office, no less than the easy-going temper of the old Lord Admiral, had combined to make the Treasurer the practical head of the navy, and Mansell found himself free to play havoc with the service. The disease, which had been poisoning the whole system since Hawkins's incorruptible and able hand had been withdrawn by death, soon began to appear like health beside the lamentable prostration into which Mansell rapidly reduced it. Money was squandered right and left while the efficiency of the fleet was as recklessly diminished. Promotion by purchase was established almost without disguise, and highly-paid officers multiplied beyond anything that had been known in the hottest days of the war. In one year, when only seven ships were in commission, there was a roster of three admirals and four vice-admirals, 'so that the navy was like an army of generals and colonels.'[1] From the top of the tree to the bottom peculation and embezzlement ran riot, and the swindling in the storehouses and dockyards was only equalled by the shameless claims which were made and allowed by the higher officers. No check was attempted, the Admiralty officers ceased to meet, Nottingham kept his eyes resolutely shut, and in four years Mansell had succeeded in wrecking the navy to such an extent that serious alarm was taken.

The first effort to check his career was in 1608. It was in this year, it will be remembered, that the Spanish navy was being reorganised in order to set free the galleons of the Ocean Guard for operations in the Mediterranean against the growing power of Ward and Danzer—operations which were intended to clear the ground for the vast naval mobilisation for the expulsion of the Moriscos. No one, however, at that time could

[1] Oppenheim, *Administration of the Royal Navy*, p. 190.

guess the real object of the activity in the Spanish ports, and relations between the Courts of London and Madrid were so severely strained that the worst was feared. Under the pressure of the new alarm, which induced James to sign an offensive and defensive alliance with the Dutch, he was also brought to grant a commission to inquire into the state of the navy, in spite of the powerful influence of the Howards.

The prime mover in the affair appears to have been Sir Robert Cotton, the famous antiquary and founder of the Cottonian Library. He was regarded as the most learned historical scholar of his time, but what his special interest in the navy was is not clear. It is interesting, however, to note that it may have been to some extent hereditary. The first Navy Commission of which we have any record owed its existence in a great measure to the fearless and incessant criticism of the administration made by a certain Sir Thomas Cotton, who served as Wafter of the Wool Fleet under Henry VIII., and as a flag officer in succeeding reigns. When in the year 1583, on the eve of war with Spain, his prolonged agitation bore fruit in the great Commission which the Queen ordered to inquire into the state of the navy, it was he who with Sir Francis Drake and three others were appointed sub-commissioners to do all the work. Whether or not this Sir Thomas was related to Sir Robert, it was by him again the bulk of the work was done, for it fell to his part to draw up the report. The duty was discharged with his customary thoroughness, and the picture of corruption and incapacity it presented is amazing. Still more astonishing is the evidence on which it was based, and which still exists among Cotton's manuscripts in the British Museum. Yet less than nothing came of it. The Lord Admiral, who was nominally at the head of the Commission, had testified the importance he attached to it by never attending the sittings. Secure in the power of his family and the growing dulness of his conscience, he treated the whole proceeding with contempt, as he well knew he could. The damning report was duly presented to the King, but the culprits suffered

nothing worse than an oration from the royal lips. They were left free to continue on their evil path, and things went rapidly from bad to worse.

Four years later, when Spain and the Empire had definitely joined hands and the Protestant powers were drawing together in a still closer union, the indefatigable Cotton tried once more. The prospect of a great European war was again at its blackest. So strained indeed were the relations of James with Spain, that Digby, the British Ambassador at Madrid, had to report that the Council was actually debating a sudden attack upon the new Dutch colony in Virginia. Moreover, as politics then stood at the English Court, Cotton was able to secure the support of both Northampton and Rochester, the most powerful of the King's sycophants and the most determined opponents of the Howards. The result was that a new Commission was issued. This time the offenders took a still bolder line. The Commission contained a clause authorising the Commissioners 'to give orders for the due punishment of the offenders,' and they determined to dispute the King's authority to issue such a charge. To this end Mansell procured from Whitelocke, the latest authority on the prerogative, an opinion that the objectionable clause was *ultra vires*. By chance it reached the King's hands. His tenderness on such high matters was acute, and it stung him more sharply than the active decay of his navy. Both Mansell and Whitelocke were arrested and brought before the Council, and only escaped the Tower by a humble submission and apology. There unfortunately the matter ended. As far as is known the Commission never reported, and the Lord Admiral and his Treasurer continued their disastrous career unchecked. Nor was it till the action of the Duke of Osuna against Venice and the utter collapse of the royal finances gave James a thorough fright that he was brought to his senses.

It was no sailor or politician who finally brought about the regeneration of the navy, but one of those plain men of business for whom England is always wont to cry out in her need. For some years past a new class of officials

had been gathering round the King, taken no longer from the ranks of the nobility and gentry, but from the middle class that was daily growing in wealth and importance. Foremost among them was Sir Lionel Cranfield. He had begun life like a story-book, as the clever and diligent apprentice whose handsome face won him the hand of his master's daughter. With this early start he rapidly became a marked man in the City, and after distinguishing himself several times in the conduct of semi-official business with the Government he was introduced to the King by Northampton as a promising man of affairs. The promise was abundantly fulfilled. In 1615 he was knighted and made Master of the Requests. Now that Robert Cecil was dead he was without a rival as a financier. So honest and capable were his methods that he rapidly obtained a position that was unassailable, and shone like an angel sent from Heaven to drag both King and courtiers from the financial slough into which they had brought themselves. One after another he took the state departments in hand, searched them to the bottom, swept them clean, reorganised them on the soundest business principles, and started them afresh on healthy lines to which no one dared to take exception. Perhaps his most remarkable gift, seeing that he made no pretension to be a politician, was his power of getting rid of the men who had caused the mischief. It was a gift that was likely to be tried to its utmost when it came to the Admiralty's turn to feel his hand.

The mere fact that a Commission had been issued was of course a severe blow to Howard's position. On the other hand it was likely to arouse the same determined opposition from his party which had already defeated two similar attempts. It was clear nothing would come of Cranfield's efforts unless the most powerful Court influence could be brought to back them. To this end Buckingham was approached. He had already reached a position in the King's favour which no intrigue could shake; he had just been created a marquis; nothing stood between him and complete domination but the serried ranks of the Howards, and on them he had declared open

war. The suggestion that he was the proper person to take the Lord Admiral's place can hardly have been unwelcome, but he modestly declined it on the ground of his youth and inexperience. But the seed was sown and for the present that was enough. Cranfield had in his mind not merely reform, but such a revolution as would render the navy practically independent of the Lord Admiral's incapacity, and the Commission got to work with a light heart. Cranfield was of course a member, but he was far too deeply occupied with other departments to take an active part in its proceedings. The bulk of the work fell on John Coke, who had been Deputy-Treasurer and Paymaster of the Navy in Sir Fulke Greville's time, and had been his right hand in trying to curb the abuses which had crept into the service in Elizabeth's last days. Even then a navy captain could write to him, 'To say truth, the whole body is so corrupted as there is no sound part almost from the head to the foot; the great ones feed on the less, and enforce them to steal both for themselves and their commanders.' Coke appears to have lost his post when by the Howard influence Greville was induced to resign in favour of Sir Robert Mansell, and he was no doubt ripe for an attack on the faction that had displaced him. He was supported by a most powerful Commission, composed of leading City merchants and shipowners, like Sir Thomas Smythe, Governor of the East India and Virginia companies, financiers like Sir John Wolstenholme, a farmer of the Customs, with a seasoning of experts from the Exchequer and practical shipbuilders. From a Commission so constructed there was no hope of escape. Mansell beat a hasty retreat. Before it could meet he obtained a promise of the Vice-Admiralship of England in place of Sir Richard Leveson, who had recently died, and sold the treasurership to a man after Cranfield's own heart, Sir William Russell, a leading Muscovy merchant.

By September the Commission had completed its report. It was of a most businesslike character, displaying no tendency to dwell upon the iniquities of the past, or to bring home to the old offenders what they so

richly deserved. It was to the future it looked, and it exposed the lamentable condition into which the old system had fallen merely to emphasise the need of reform. In an interim report Coke had been able to show that of the forty-three vessels borne on the Navy List, fourteen, or one third, were unserviceable; three apparently did not even exist, though their upkeep was regularly paid for; while three others were useless till repaired. The navy was in fact weaker by six good ships than in the last year of Elizabeth. Yet the ordinary charge had risen to over 50,000*l.* a year, or more than it had been in some of the last years of the war. During this time nineteen new vessels had been ostensibly added to the navy, but of these two had been begun under Fulke Greville, two had been bought, two were pinnaces, and most of the rest were reconstructions carried out in the most wasteful and inefficient manner. The only substantial addition had been the famous 'Prince Royal,' the largest ship ever designed for the navy. In their final report the Commissioners dealt with thirty-five vessels only. Of these, four were the useless galleys which had been built during Spinola's scare; nine, including four large galleons, were decayed beyond repair, leaving fifteen great ships and eleven smaller vessels which they considered might be made serviceable. It was an overwhelming exposure, but no worse than every one must have expected.

Of far greater interest were the proposals for the future. They were of the most drastic kind. First was laid down a minimum establishment of which the navy should consist. Thirty efficient vessels, the Commissioners considered, was all that could be hoped for at present, owing mainly to the heavy calls upon material and seamen by the increasing number of powerful merchantmen which were being built, and the ever widening area of British commerce. The thirty vessels they proposed to class as follows: Four 'ships royal' of over 800 tons, all of which already existed; fourteen 'great ships' between 600 and 800 tons, of which eight already existed, and six must be built to replace five decayed vessels and the four galleys; six 'middling ships' of 450 tons, of which three must be

built to replace five decayed smaller ones; two 'small ships' of 350 tons, of which one must be built; and four pinnaces under 300 tons. This establishment, they pointed out, though numerically smaller than that of Elizabeth, yet exceeded it in total burden by over 3,000 tons. True, it left ten ships to be provided; but by building two a year they considered the standard might be reached in five years, at a total cost of 30,000*l.* a year. In other words, they reported that the effective strength of the navy might be nearly doubled for little more than half what it had been costing.

The policy on which this programme was based was perfectly clear and well reasoned. It was no new thing; it merely carried to its logical conclusion the immemorial tradition which regarded the merchant marine as an integral part of the naval force of the kingdom. In those days sea-borne commerce was not regarded as a source of weakness, but of strength. The idea of commerce protection, as we understand it, was unborn. Beyond the limits of the Four Seas it was not held to be the province of the royal navy. Ocean-going merchantmen expected to protect themselves. Not only did they make no demand upon the royal ships, but, as a matter of course, accepted the position of an auxiliary navy. All therefore that was new in the Commissioners' project was the breadth of vision with which they conceived the whole as one great national force, and assigned to each branch of it its special functions. Small ships in the royal navy, they declared—beyond three or four for special service—were a mere waste, since whenever they were wanted they could be had from the merchants in any number. It was clearly their idea that the true function of the royal navy was to provide a squadron of powerful ships to form the backbone of the fighting fleet, and that the merchant marine should be looked to for the rest. Or, as we should put it now, the royal navy ought to be confined, or nearly so, to battleships, and the merchant marine should be relied on for cruisers and minor types when occasion arose for a larger number than were sufficient for the ordinary service of the Narrow Seas. There is in this

policy a comprehensive grasp of the whole problem of naval defence, such as had never yet been so clearly enunciated, or perhaps even so clearly conceived by any professional seaman. We see stamped upon the whole document the influence of men educated to statesmanship in the management of the great trading companies, of men accustomed to look their resources fairly in the face, to measure them without self-deception, and to husband and distribute them with a single eye to achieving the utmost return for the capital and energy invested. Small as was the force they proposed, judged by modern standards, they knew it was all the existing resources of the country could keep in a state of high efficiency, such as they were accustomed to in their own business, and they knew that if it was so kept it was enough; 'enough,' as they said, 'with private ships without foreign aid to encounter any Prince's sea forces.'

But they did not stop here. Merely to point out what should be done they knew was useless. To leave the old system intact was only to have their report shelved, and no sooner was it presented and well received than they prepared their final blow. The first sign of what was coming was a whisper that Buckingham had abandoned his modest attitude and was prepared to accept the office of Lord High Admiral jointly with the old Earl of Nottingham, and that the Prince of Wales had surrendered in Buckingham's favour the reversion of the office which had been granted him as Duke of York before his elder brother's death. Every one seemed to regard this as a preliminary to the graceful supersession of the unhappy old Admiral. But there was more behind. The news was followed immediately by an announcement that the Commissioners had offered the King to undertake the whole management of the Admiralty for 30,000*l.* a year, and to carry out the programme they had laid down, if he would appoint them as a permanent Board. So revolutionary a proposal, which would reduce the Lord Admiral to the position of chairman of a board of directors, was more than Nottingham with his old-world aristocratic ideas could tolerate. He opposed it with his whole weight,

and as it meant a clean sweep of all the old officers they too supported him fiercely. All was of no avail, for Buckingham was on the side of the reform. Coke had written him an ingenious letter explaining on behalf of the Commissioners that their proposals, so far from decreasing his power and dignity, would really enhance it, since under the new system the heads of departments, instead of being officially appointed by the King and for life, would now be but members of the Commission holding their appointments directly from the Lord Admiral and during his pleasure. Even the Commission itself depended for its existence solely on his protection and influence. 'Be pleased, my good Lord,' he urged, 'to consider that the Lord Admiral's greatness is not to have a market under him of base and unworthy people that betray the King's honour and his by the sale of places, havoc of provisions and ruins of ships, but his true and real greatness is the power and greatness of the King, the confidence of his favour, the trust of his service, and the reputation and flourishing state of the navy.' With these considerations Buckingham, whose zeal for a powerful navy was thoroughly genuine, was satisfied, and perhaps even relieved; and with his support it was an understood thing that the Commissioners' proposal would be accepted. It was the last blow to the old Lord Admiral. To be openly recognised as the mere figure-head that he had been for a quarter of a century was more than he could bear, and he readily availed himself of Buckingham's offer to buy him out.

So amidst the downfall of the Howard family fell the impressive figure which for years had been honoured as the personification of the naval glories of Elizabeth. When we remember what the Howard position had been, it is no less than astonishing to see how it crumbled at the touch of the modern commercial spirit. With a cynical directness Cranfield had gone on the principle that it is cheaper to buy out obstruction than to waste time and energy in getting it removed by force, and his policy proved a complete success. For so businesslike an attack the men of the Court were wholly unprepared,

and the whole system went down before it smoothly like a pack of cards.

Nor was this the only sign of the times. As Elizabeth's old Lord Admiral was thus deferentially handed from his seat, there was played out the tragedy of the last of the Elizabethans. The Commissioners had hardly got to work when Sir Walter Ralegh returned from his melancholy failure in Guiana, and while Cranfield and his men laboured to disentangle the web of corruption, Gondomar was pressing for Ralegh's blood, as years before Mendoza had growled for Drake's. Every one knows how differently the two demands were met. Though Spain, through her viceroy at Naples, had been playing a game beside which Ralegh's was almost innocence, James had neither the art nor the courage to resist. Within a week of Nottingham's fall the successor of Elizabeth drank the last dregs of his long truckling to Spain, and Ralegh's body was lying headless on Tower Hill.

So the old era came to a close. Ralegh had rejected the principle of action in the Mediterranean in favour of a revival of the old ideas under which he had lived. He could not see that they were out of date, and martyrdom with a kind of strange canonisation was his reward. At the same moment the new men were raising the navy from its ashes ready for the new career that was rapidly opening before it, and dimly grasping at the main line of its future energy. With Ralegh's death the oceanic era of Elizabeth passed away, and in its place the era of the Mediterranean was dawning.

CHAPTER VII

THE NAVY AND THE PALATINATE

With Gondomar's tragic success Spanish diplomacy appeared triumphant. It seemed for the moment as though British policy was to be brought into complete subserviency to that of Spain. But, in truth, it was the turning of the leaf. Events were rapidly shaping themselves for the teaching of the new page, and public opinion, no less than statesmen's judgment, was ripening to give it life. The sacrifice of the last of the Elizabethans was more than Englishmen could endure. Unpopular as Ralegh had been all his life, in his dignified martyrdom he became the patron saint of the British creed—of the faith which combined in one dogma the spirit of the Reformation and the spirit of imperial expansion. The ring of the axe that had laid the old adventurer low re-awakened the old aggressive passion. The smouldering hatred of Spain blazed out again; the London mob vented its fury by an attack on the Spanish Embassy; and when Gondomar left the country—though he had ridden to the coast in a kind of triumph like a conqueror—it was to advise his master that on no account must he break with England.

It was wise counsel. The Bohemian revolution had already lit the spark of the Thirty Years' War. It was to James's son-in-law, the Prince Palatine, that the Bohemians were looking for support against the House of Austria, and in view of the new alliance between Philip and the Emperor, and the suspicious naval activity in the Spanish ports, even James could not sit quiet. Mindful of Osuna's recent attempt, which might well be renewed, he had sent to inquire what were the intentions of Spain

in regard to his son-in-law's dominions. The great fear of the Court of Madrid was that in the coming contest James would be pushed into the arms of the war party and finally declare himself the head of the Protestant Church militant. As things stood the dual alliance had little to fear, but with the English fleet thrown into the scale there was small doubt which way it would turn. As Gondomar pointed out, re-echoing Osuna's incessant cry, whoever was master at sea would soon be master ashore. The halting mobilisation which was then in progress had revealed that the Spanish navy, as he said, had never been so unready for war, while in a few weeks England could mobilise a powerful fleet, besides the swarm of privateers that would immediately cover the sea. The only policy for Spain was to keep James in a good humour, and to this end they should revive the negotiations for the marriage between the Prince of Wales and the Infanta. Nor was there any time to lose. Rival proposals were being made to James from Germany, Savoy, and France; and Dutch envoys were actually in London settling the strained relations which had arisen between the two countries in the East Indies, and urging the King to declare war on Spain.

Gondomar, in his eagerness to secure the neutrality of England, probably exaggerated the readiness of the royal navy. Still, he was not far wrong. In the six months that had elapsed since he left London, things had changed greatly for the better. Though Buckingham and the Commission were not officially appointed till February 1619, they had been diligently at work. The worst of the abuses had been already cleaned up. Two new ships had been laid down in accordance with their programme, and they were making rapid progress. The King was giving his new servants a loyal, even enthusiastic support. When the new ships were complete, he went down to Deptford in state to see them launched. He performed the christening ceremony in person. Draining a bumper to the new Commissioners' health, he congratulated Buckingham on his choice of officers, and the officers on the beauty of the new vessels, on the rapidity of their build-

ing, and no less on the economical accounts they had offered for his inspection.[1] In his high satisfaction he broke quite away from the traditional nomenclature of the royal navy. The larger of the two vessels, 'a great ship' of the second rank, he named, in honour of the reforming Commissioners, 'The Reformation,' a name which was changed, perhaps in view of its doubtful meaning, to 'Constant Reformation.' The other, a ship of the third rank, he called in honour of the new Lord Admiral's *début*, 'Buckingham's Entrance,' a name which was afterwards changed, possibly as being too great a departure from custom, to 'Happy Entrance.' Two more ships of the same ratings were immediately laid down in their places, and everything promised that Buckingham's entrance was really happy, and the reformation likely to be constant.[2]

But this was not all to which Gondomar could point in support of his view that at all costs England and her sea forces must be kept neutral. During the time the naval reorganisation had been going on much had occurred to give his opinion emphasis. Even before he left the kingdom in the summer of 1618, he had received an object lesson of how men of the new Commissioner's stamp could prepare a fleet. It must be remembered that this was the time when Osuna's contemplated design on Venice was ripening, and the encouragement which the Spanish Government had been secretly giving was suddenly changed to opposition by the news of what the Republic was doing in Holland and England. It was about the middle of January 1618 that the Venetian Ambassador in London got leave to charter eight men-of-war. On April 8, within three months, he went down to Deptford to see them off. He was received with a

[1] Salvetti, Nov. 22, 1619. Chamberlain to Carleton, Nov. 13, *S.P. Dom.*

[2] In view of the difficult question of comparing English and foreign ship measurements, it is interesting to note that Salvetti says the two vessels were of 800 and 500 tons respectively, and 'we,' he adds, 'calculate the ton at 5 *salme* each.' The English official measurement was: 'Constant Reformation,' burden 564, ton or tonnage 752; 'Happy Entrance,' 437 and 582. They were usually rated at 750 and 580.

rousing salute and a grand luncheon, as the importance of the occasion demanded, and his smart little fleet dropped down the river to be ready for the first fair wind. On the 23rd they were well away and were expected to reach Gibraltar by May 1. It was under Sir John Peyton that they eventually sailed. Who the seaman commander was is not known, but it was not Mainwaring. At the last moment the Government felt that the reformed pirate, for all his repentance, was not to be trusted on the high seas, and he had to go to Venice overland. On the same day that the ships left Deptford the contingent of twelve sail, which the Venetian Ambassador had equipped in Holland, put to sea, and with it sailed a regular Dutch squadron of fourteen sail. It was intended, as was announced, to police the Straits against the Barbary corsairs, but there was small doubt its objective would be changed if occasion arose, and for Spain it was no less a cause for anxiety than the two hired squadrons which were sailing openly under the flag of St. Mark.[1]

It was no wonder, then, that the Spanish Government was at its wit's end. During the whole time that the English squadron had been preparing, they had been bombarding Osuna with orders to quit the Adriatic, and as yet had received from him nothing but excuses for disobedience. Don Miguel de Vidazabal, one of the finest seamen in their service, who had recently been made vice-admiral of the Cantabrian Squadron, was watching the Straits with seven ships and two caravels. Whether to reinforce him or not with such vessels as the groaning mobilisation would allow became a subject of anxious debate in the Council. Three new galleons were sent him; but on June 18, before they had made up their minds to do more, the two Dutch squadrons were sighted from the top of the Rock. What had become of the English squadron, or why the Dutch had been so long on the way, is difficult to ascertain. The two contingents had certainly not joined hands, and Vidazabal

[1] Salvetti's *News Letters*, April 18 to May 31, 1618, *Add. MSS.* 27962, vol. i. Salvetti was the London agent of the Grand Duke of Tuscany.

felt justified in attacking, since the States admiral drew off and left the Venetian squadron to take its own course. The action lasted four hours, and when darkness separated the fleets Vidazabal had to report forty killed and thirty wounded, with the usual rider that the Dutch were believed to have suffered much more heavily. During the night he prepared to renew the action, but to his chagrin received an order from Santa-Cruz to the effect that his Majesty had resolved not to oppose the passage of the Venetian squadron. A week before, peremptory orders to the same effect had been sent to Osuna, and at last he had obeyed.[1]

So far, then, the naval intervention of England and her ally in the Mediterranean had been a complete success. Venice was safe, and Spain's hand was forced. The extensive naval mobilisation for what was officially styled 'the Secret Expedition' had now to take definite shape. Whether or not it had been intended to back up Osuna's blow, if it had succeeded, is unknown. At any rate, it was no longer possible to cover such a design under the cloak of operations against the pirates. It was a game two could play, and the Northern powers had won the first point. There was every prospect of their continuing the match with ever increasing boldness and all the leading cards in their hand. In fact, the pirates whom Spain had nursed so long could no more serve as a mask for her ambition. They had become, by her own supineness, a handle for her enemies—a handle by which at any moment they could open wide the gate of the Mediterranean. It was clear that if Spain hoped to preserve the domination of her sphere, she must set herself with a single eye to removing the cause of offence. Within a week of Vida-

[1] Duro, *Armada Española*, iii. 357, 498. It is probable that the English squadron had already passed the Straits, perhaps about June 10, as Salvetti expected; for on the 13th an urgent order was sent to Osuna to withdraw his fleet from Brindisi and send it to reinforce the fleet that was being mobilised against Algiers. This was the order he finally obeyed. On the other hand, there is a despatch of Osuna's dated July 24, saying that the English and Dutch have begun to enter the Adriatic (*Doc. Inéd.*). Possibly, therefore, both the fleets had been detained by a long spell of foul weather and passed the Straits about the same time.

zabal's action an Algerian fleet was reported returning from a raid at Lanzerote in the Canaries. Vidazabal at once agreed with the admiral of the States squadron that was still lying in the Straits to join hands. Together they fell upon the corsairs, and in a few hours completely destroyed them. About the same time Osuna, who, since his designs on Venice were defeated, was throwing himself heart and soul into the destruction of the Mussulman sea power, sent his admiral, Don Otavio de Aragon, into Turkish waters, where he entered and played havoc in the Dardanelles. Another squadron made a successful raid on Bizerta, while similar activity was displayed by the King's galleys on the coast of Valencia. At length Spain seemed in earnest, and it was known she was mustering a great galley fleet from all parts of her dominions for the spring of 1619.

Still, in view of the war clouds that overhung Europe, no one could believe she had not some ulterior design, and least of all England. Under Gondomar's advice a special envoy had been sent to James to revive the marriage negotiations, and to get him to offer his mediation between Bohemia and the Empire. His vanity, which was always picturing him as the peacemaker of Europe, quickly swallowed the bait, and Spain thought herself safe. Philip immediately announced to the Archduke Albert, Governor of the Spanish Netherlands, that he had decided to give active support to his Austrian ally, and informed the Emperor himself, that he was ready to give him a large sum of money, and, if that did not suffice, troops should follow. This was at the opening of the year 1619. The news of the activity in the Spanish ports was becoming daily more ominous, and by the end of January every one had taken the alarm. Sir Dudley Carleton, the British Minister in Holland, sent over word that the rendezvous for the galley fleet had been discovered to be Messina. This place, from its remarkable strategical position, was the traditional point of concentration for the combined Christian fleets which had so often assembled to crush the Moslem sea power. Still suspicion was in no way disarmed. Indeed, so central and

well placed is the port for operations in any part of the Mediterranean, that nobody could be at ease. The Dutch were certain it portended what every one feared. 'It makes them judge,' wrote Carleton, 'that the storm will first fall on the Venetians by forcing a passage through the Gulf to Trieste in Istria, and after upon the Bohemians.' [1]

The real intention of the Spanish Council cannot be determined, even if they had definitely decided on any particular line of action. Ever since the death of the inflexible Philip II. they had pursued a policy of drift and vacillation, and were probably doing the same thing now. For James, in any case, it was unnecessary to come to a conclusion. He still had ready to his hand the weapon which would cut either way. It will be remembered that when Digby, in May 1617, had returned to Madrid to press the King's marriage proposals more firmly on Philip III., the goad he carried was a proposal for joint action by the leading sea powers—all of them hostile to Spain—against the Barbary pirates. His suggestion was that each of them should provide a squadron of twenty sail to act together for three years from April 1619. Little is known of the course of the negotiation.[2] France apparently was favourable, but the Dutch were not so sure. They had recently established diplomatic relations with the corsairs, and their consul at Algiers had succeeded in negotiating a treaty whereby their ships were to be free from molestation, and they were able to do a remunerative trade at the pirate ports in munitions of war. However, the treaty had not been actually ratified, and they expressed in general terms a desire to further James's scheme.[3] The King of Spain was naturally suspicious, but the negotiations continued fitfully and with some ill humour. James at any rate had his heart in the project. If he had no higher motive he was certainly anxious to enjoy posing as the leader of Christendom, and in any case the

[1] *S.P. Holland*, Jan. 25, 1619.

[2] Dr. Gardiner found that the bundle of papers relating to this affair is missing from the Simancas archives. I take the terms from Duro, *op. cit.* iii. 360.

[3] *Carleton Letters*, 136, 143, June 4; 324, July 7, 1617, and cf. *ib.* p. 491.

weapon was too nicely adjusted to meet the equivocal attitude of Spain to be abandoned.

Thus the first duty that fell upon Buckingham and the new Commissioners on formally taking up their duties was to mobilise six vessels of the royal navy, to which were to be added five from the Cinque Ports and fourteen from the merchants, making in all a fleet of twenty-five sail. At the same time the Dutch were definitely invited to co-operate with a similar force, with the idea that the two squadrons should enter the Mediterranean together, and offer their assistance to the Spanish admiral in his operation against Algiers—a course which put them in a position to see that his Armada was not used against Venice or for any other undesirable object.[1] The Grand Duke of Tuscany, who was to provide a contingent for the Spanish fleet, was immediately informed by Salvetti, his agent in London, of what was going on in the English dockyards. The King, he wrote, had ordered a fleet to be equipped as soon as possible, so as to sail at any moment. It was to join with twenty-four Dutchmen and enter the Mediterranean on pretence of operating against the pirates, but really to keep an eye on Spain. Everything indeed assures us that this was the main object of the armament. In a minute which Coke wrote at this time, recommending greater secrecy in Admiralty business, the trend of official opinion is quite clear. 'In this preparation against pirates,' he says, 'it may be conceived the State hath some further design, and if it be governed by general warrants it will go slowly on. The gazetteers of Venice will take notice of it, as they have done of our former propositions. But if it be thought fit to carry it by the trust of a few and by degrees, by this unexpected preparation his Majesty's sea forces shall be redeemed from contempt; his present treaties with our neighbours shall have more reputation; foreign princes will with more respect proceed in their attempts; and if they find any interruptions in their principal designs they shall not have the advantage of our security and nakedness to redeem their honours by falling on us.'

[1] Gardiner, iii. 289.

As we have seen, the preparation was already not an entire secret, and unfortunately it was no more sudden than secret. Cranfield's reform had not had time to show effect, and mainly for want of money the mobilisation proceeded very heavily. Contributions had been demanded from the seaports, but they came in slowly. The fact was, the English merchants, like the Dutch, had come to some kind of arrangement with the pirates, and so deep was their mistrust of the navy that they feared an attack on Algiers would only end in failure and exasperate the pirates without reducing their power. Moreover, the general opinion was that the Spanish armament was really intended to take advantage of the condition to which our national defences had been reduced by the shortcomings of the late administration, and from all the ports local governors were crying for means to prepare the coast defences against an invasion, while all over the country the county forces were being specially mustered to prepare them for mobilisation.

So great indeed was the financial difficulty that it produced a most remarkable proposition to the Lord Admiral. It came from Sir Henry Mainwaring, who had recently returned from Venice, disgusted probably, like most other people, with land service under the Republic, and sighing for the excitement of his old life at sea. The Venetian Ambassador, it appears, had been instructed by his Government, who must have either mistrusted or been unaware of James's secret intention, to apply to him for the loan of some of the royal ships, and the Ambassador had asked Mainwaring to feel the ground for him. Upon this he applied to Buckingham. 'The Venetians' request to his Majesty,' he wrote, 'is only for the loan of some of his Majesty's ships, and they to bear the charge of waging and victualling the men, giving security to restore and repair them.' The Venetians had taken the most serious alarm at the fleet that was gathering in the Spanish ports; and Mainwaring, whom the Venetians wished to command the proposed contingent, saw his way to turning it to advantage. 'His Majesty,' he continued, 'may pretend to lay down any suspicion of this [that is, the

Spanish] fleet in regard to himself, and therefore that he will desist from fitting his own ships. But if the Venetians will be at the charge, they may have orders to go forth—with this commission, that if the Spanish fleet bear in with the Straits they may follow them, and so stand for the Gulf [of Venice], whither they will arrive first, because the Spanish fleet must stop at Messina. If the Spanish fleet go not to the southward, then the Venetians have no need of a supply, and the ships are ready to proceed on his Majesty's own designs. But if the Spanish fleet should dissolve, the ships being forth might be employed against the Turkish pirates.' [1]

From this it is clear and worthy of note that what the Venetians feared was not the galleys but the galleons that were being fitted out in the Atlantic ports. Mainwaring's suggestion for meeting the whole situation was as ingenious as his strategy was sound. It was practically the line the Dutch meant to take as preferable to that approved by James. Indeed, their answer to the English proposal was so unsatisfactory as to amount to a virtual refusal. They objected with some force that they had already twenty-five sail at sea, of which twenty-one were employed against the pirates. As for attacking Algiers, that would mean an act of war against 'the Sultan of Constantinople,' with whom they were at peace, while as for protecting Venice, that would amount to a breach of their truce with Spain; and, further, as they naïvely explained, they were allowing the Venetians to fit out four large men-of-war in Holland, although they had not asked so much, and had agreed that they should keep the eleven already in their service besides eight merchantmen that were also in their pay. Such an answer of course entirely upset James's great design, and notwithstanding the temptation of the scheme which Mainwaring had to offer in its place, it could not be thought of. Buckingham's dignity, if not the King's, could not submit to the hiring out of navy ships to a foreign power; nor could the Commissioners consent to a project which would at the outset seriously

[1] *S.P. Dom.* 1619, cv. 148.

disturb the programme they had taken office to carry through.

To confirm the impossibility of proceeding with the King's original scheme, no satisfactory answer had yet been received from Spain with regard to the proposed joint operations, and, even if it came, such was the feeling at the time, both in Court and the country, that it became clearer every day that it was out of the question to expect Englishmen to act harmoniously with Spaniards. Fortunately, the deadlock mattered little. The King's astute design appears already to have done its work, and just about the time that the final answer of the Dutch was received, news arrived from Cottington, the British envoy in Madrid, that the Spanish preparations were at an end. The tidings have a special interest of their own. The formation of a galley fleet was certainly not suspended, and here, therefore, we have another proof of how obsolete galleys had become in the eyes of the Northern powers. They were clearly regarded as a negligible quantity. The whole apprehension had been for the sailing vessels which had been getting ready in the oceanic ports. Still the English preparations were not immediately relaxed. It was given out that Lord Southampton, the arch-enemy of Spain, was to be offered the command of the proposed fleet. It was not till April that the work on the ships was finally suspended, the collection stopped, and the money returned to the merchants on the understanding it was to be ready at short notice, in case the mobilisation had to be revived.

The news that Cottington had sent was true. The Spanish Government, whatever their original intentions may have been, were now devoting their whole energy to removing the great flaw in their position by crushing the pirates. A fleet of sixty galleys assembled at Messina under the incompetent Prince Philibert of Savoy, on whose employment Philip relied for checking the designs of his turbulent father.[1] The objective was Navarino, the most westerly naval station of the Turks; but, accord-

[1] Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy was the son of Charles Emmanuel, the reigning Duke, by the Infanta Catherine, sister of Philip III. of Spain.

ing to Italian historians, the Duke of Osuna, in his jealousy of doing anything that would strengthen the position of the Venetians, succeeded in diverting the expedition into attempting a surprise of the port of Susa below Tunis. The attack failed ignominiously, and Philibert was driven off with severe loss. Nor did the galleons effect much more in the ocean. The annual convoys were safely brought in, but only two pirate vessels were taken, and so ended the campaign, leaving the corsairs as powerful as before, and even more confident. James's stalking-horse was as good as ever, and there was every sign of its shelter being shortly required.

The Emperor Mathias was dead, and Ferdinand of Styria claimed to succeed him as King of Bohemia, in virtue of his previous election. In August he was also elected Emperor, and the revolutionary Government in Bohemia, seeing the mistake they had made in choosing a Catholic King, determined not to receive him. By a solemn vote of the Estates he was deposed, and Frederick, the Prince Palatine, elected in his place. For a while James's feather-headed son-in-law hesitated. Almost every one advised him to refuse so thorny and dangerous a seat; but his fair and high-spirited English wife urged him to accept, being sure of her father's support; and finally he took the rash step that was his downfall. For long the elements that went to make up the Thirty Years' War had been smouldering hotter and hotter. This last touch set all in a glow, and at any moment men looked to see the flames burst out in uncontrollable fury. For all her long intriguing Spain was unready for the moment. Her one idea still was to keep the English sea power neutral. The mediation into which to this end she had tempted James had failed, and there was nothing left but to let herself be drawn into the net which he had so cleverly spread in her path. She could resist the pressure no longer, and a few days before the Prince Palatine's election preliminaries had been signed which accepted in principle the idea of joint action with England against the pirates. Instead of neutralising the dreaded force, she had opened the gate to admit it into the last place

where she would like to have seen it. That arch-intriguer and opportunist, the Duke of Savoy, with his eyes always on Genoa and Milan, was encouraging the Prince Palatine in his wildest dreams, and just when the two places were most vital to Spain for her communications with the Emperor, she saw them once more threatened with a storm out of the North Sea.

At the close of the year news reached England that Frederick had actually been crowned King of Bohemia. The people were wild with delight, and James, torn between anxiety and indignation, allowed the collections for a fleet against the Barbary pirates, which had been stopped in April, to be re-opened. At the end of October he had received from Holland the long-deferred answer to his original proposals for a league against the corsairs. With many excuses for the delay, the States informed him they had decided not to ratify the treaty which their consul had made at Algiers. They had now ready for sea a squadron of fourteen sail under Moy Lambert, of Rotterdam, that was about to cruise against the common enemy, and they intended to relieve him in the spring with an equal force. So long as their resources lasted, they meant to continue the efforts against the Moslem pest, but without his Majesty's powerful hand they saw small appearance of utterly suppressing it. 'Wherefore they humbly besought him to show himself therein, as well by good effects in arming against the pirates as he had done by his advice and counsel to their own State.'[1]

Of this appeal little notice appears to have been taken. Although the maintenance of a permanent Mediterranean squadron which the Dutch proposed was exactly what all the English experts advised, James was too much incensed with the cold reception with which the Dutch had greeted the proposal, when he himself was hot about it, to treat them with much respect. Now, however, that the war fever about him was growing so high, he appears to have thought it best, as they said, 'to show himself therein,' and he began in royal style. In January 1620

[1] *Carleton Letters*, p. 397, October 22, 1619.

it was announced that Sir Robert Mansell, Vice-Admiral of the Kingdom and Lieutenant of the Royal Navy, was to command the fleet, and for his second he was to have the famous Sir Richard Hawkins, Vice-Admiral of Devon, the personification of all the finest traditions of the Elizabethan service. For moral effect no better choice could have been made. The official rank of Mansell would give the necessary dignity, while for Spanish seamen there lay in the name Hawkins terrors which made it second only to that of Drake.

As for the fleet itself, it was serious enough to justify the anxiety that was felt in Spain. It was to consist of six of the best ships in the royal navy, ten powerful merchantmen, and two pinnaces, or eighteen sail in all.[1] It was months, however, before the Navy Commissioners were allowed to get to work. The winter passed away and they were still without definite orders to proceed. For James, as for Elizabeth, it was one thing to decide on mobilising a fleet, and another to let it sail. Through the early part of 1620 he continued to sit in a fever of irresolution as to what attitude he should take to his son-in-law's position. As the opposing parties and opposing anxieties pushed him this way and that, he was worried beyond bearing and strove pitiably to put off a decision like a Penelope by sitting down to an exhaustive study of Bohemian constitutional law from the earliest times. By the end of January Philip, who feared war as much as James himself, had finally given in to the Duke of Bavaria's proposals for the partition of the Palatinate. This was followed in February by the arrival in London of Ambassadors from the German Protestant Union to claim James's assistance in defending the threatened State. At first he was furious at being called upon to help the reckless son-in-law who had refused to listen to his advice, but gradually he began to give way. There was also in London a certain Scottish soldier of fortune, a Colonel Gray, who had come from Bohemia in search of troops, and had brought with him not only letters from Frederick and the King's daughter, but also one written in pleading terms

[1] See *post*, p. 99.

by his little grandson.[1] It seems greatly to have affected the old King, and Gray soon obtained permission to raise two regiments—one in England and one in Scotland.

The war party was triumphant. At last it seemed they had the upper hand, when in the midst of their rejoicing Gondomar once more landed at Dover. Having been dragged into the struggle himself Philip was more than ever resolved that James and his navy must be kept out of it, and Gondomar's influence was his last hope. Every one knew what he had come for. He was met by Sir Henry Mainwaring, who not long after his return from Venice had been made Lieutenant of Dover Castle, probably to keep him quiet, and there he was sitting like a watchdog at the gate of the kingdom, allowing nothing to escape his keen eye. The Ambassador's reception was of the coldest. There was no salute and no banquet, but Mainwaring went down to the beach to receive him, 'for which courtesy,' as the reformed pirate wrote, 'he said in jest he would excuse me twelve crowns out of the million I owed to Spaniards if I would pay the rest.' A courtly jest enough, but one that showed the fangs, and so the two dogs growled and bristled, and Gondomar passed on. Colonel Gray's drums were beating merrily for the new regiments when he reached London, re-echoing those in the Spanish Netherlands, where Spinola was mobilising the Archduke's forces for what every one felt was an invasion of the Palatinate. Gray even halted insolently under the Ambassador's very window, and, amid the jeers of a sympathetic crowd, cried for all true men who would serve the King's son-in-law to come to the place appointed. In the night his broadside was even fixed to the Embassy door. But all was of small avail. In a week the King was again in the hollow of Gondomar's hand, and the prospect of the fleet sailing for the Mediterranean seemed as far off as ever.

If James wished to be a peacemaker he was letting his great opportunity slip. As the long truce between Spain and the Dutch was drawing to an end, Philip was

[1] Salvetti, $\frac{\text{Feb. 24.}}{\text{Mar. 6.}}$

no less disturbed than James at the prospect of war. He was wholly unprepared, and during the previous summer had had the most serious cause for anxiety about his position in the Mediterranean. The Duke of Osuna was still in power at Naples, and he was known to be chafing dangerously at the way the Government had treated his brilliant efforts to restore Spanish prestige upon the sea. The enforced failure of his grand scheme had been followed by orders to send troops by way of Trieste to reinforce the Emperor for his operations against Bohemia, and to get them there quietly he had been told that the permission of the Venetians was to be asked. He was also ordered to replace the troops in the Milanese, which were going by land to the Netherlands under the Duke of Savoy's sanction, with the best of his own, and, worst of all, there was fresh talk of breaking up his fleet. His term of office was coming to an end, but there was grave anxiety whether he would lay it down quietly. In July a report had reached London that he had actually revolted and set up an independent kingdom at Naples in alliance with France and Venice. For some weeks this news, which, if true, would have entirely changed the balance of power in the Mediterranean, was the talk of the town.[1] Nothing, however, came of the alarm, but it was quickly followed by the discovery of a league between Venice and Holland which was almost as bad. Every week the atmosphere grew more warlike, and James, beside himself with irresolution, was blubbering to Gondomar over his hard fate to be king in such a world. Philip, as anxious as himself, was writing in the most serious terms to the Archduke in Brussels to warn him against the danger he was running in meddling with the Bohemian quarrel. If his general, Spinola, were permitted to attack the Palatinate, it would mean certain war with England, and that, as Philip urged, had always been considered the most impolitic thing a Spanish king could take in hand.

Still of this James knew nothing. At Deptford and Chatham little or nothing was being done to prepare the fleet till suddenly in the first week in April, just a month

[1] Salvetti, July 4-9.

after Gondomar's landing, the Navy Commissioners received orders to push on the work with all speed.[1] The reason of the sudden change is not quite clear. Salvetti believed that it was because Osuna, whose fleet, to prevent a recurrence of the late alarm, had been broken up, had been ordered to send some of his galleons to Cadiz.[2] It is also worthy of note that, a few days later, Mainwaring at Dover sent up word that transports carrying some two thousand Spanish troops had touched there, bound for the Archduke's port of Dunkirk. But, whatever the cause, from that time the dockyards were in full swing. The King might be a baby in Gondomar's hands, but it was another task to control the powerful war party at Court. Already Gondomar had had a rebuff to warn him. Captain Roger North, one of Ralegh's old companions, had fitted out a small expedition for South America in which several influential persons were interested. The Amazons was said to be its destination, and the Ambassador had demanded its arrest. North had already left the Thames; but about the same time that the Navy Commissioners received their instructions to proceed with the fleet, Gondomar received an order under the Great Seal that North was to be stayed at Plymouth. A month later, news came that North had sailed before the order reached him. Gondomar was naturally incensed. To appease him a proclamation against the offender was issued and a royal pinnace sent in pursuit of him. Of course it never found him. It was like the old times of Hawkins and Drake over again, when such escapades were of yearly occurrence, and the prospects of the war party grew brighter than ever.

When in April Salvetti announced to his Government that the fleet was to be mobilised, he had said he was sure it could not be ready for sea under two or three months. It really took longer, partly for lack of money, and partly perhaps because it was not intended that it

[1] *Coke MSS.*, p. 107.

[2] *News Letter*, April 21 to May 1. Three of Osuna's galleons left Naples on April 8–18 and reached Gibraltar May 20–30. *Documentos Inéditos*, xlvii. 418–19.

should sail before August. The fact was that Gondomar, to whom the unwelcome negotiations for the combined operations against the corsairs had been confided, was doing everything in his power to render them abortive. The principle of the arrangement was that each country was to provide a fleet of twenty sail which were to keep the seas from May till October for three years, and Gondomar was stipulating for a system of co-operation which he must have known would never be accepted by the English seamen. The fleets were to act in two separate squadrons, one within and one without the Straits; and as James insisted on his own fleet taking the Mediterranean station, Gondomar was proposing, with the obvious intention of keeping a watch on it and neutralising its initiative, that six vessels from the Spanish squadron should be attached to it, and that their place should be filled by six British ships being placed under the Spanish admiral for service with him outside the Straits. He further desired, with an equally obvious intention of gaining time, that the British fleet, instead of going straight to its allotted station, should begin operations with a cruise on the north coast of Spain.[1]

To all appearance Spain was perfectly ready to abide by her promise. Osuna's galleons had come round to Cadiz, and a fleet was out ostensibly awaiting the arrival of the English squadron. But it was understood in Spain that Mansell would not move till every detail was settled; and secure in Gondomar's skill the Spanish Government was easy that nothing could be done for that season at least. Towards the end of May, however, they were surprised by a sudden announcement from Sir Walter Aston, James's new Ambassador at Madrid, that Sir Robert Mansell would sail about the end of July, and that in the meanwhile he had instructions to settle with them the small points of detail which were still outstanding. The King his master hoped, in spite of the differences that had arisen, co-operation could be arranged, but in any case

[1] *Aston MSS.* vol. ii. (*B.M. Add.* 36445) fol. 11. *Copy of Articles for joint action &c.* These articles recite the original negotiations of Digby in 1617.

he meant to carry the pirate business through. The ministers were aghast. They protested it was never intended that the English fleet should move till everything had been settled. They even accused the Ambassador of having sent for the ships, and on the plea that the matter was in Gondomar's hands they flatly refused to negotiate.

All was in vain. Their sullen resistance only brought them a still severer shock. About a month later, after having reported their attitude home, Aston received instructions to inform the Spanish Government that James had made up his mind to undertake the pirates single-handed. Their position was completely turned, and ten days afterwards Buckingham notified to Gondomar officially that Mansell would sail between August 5 and 10, and go straight to the Mediterranean.[1] The following day, July 20, Mansell's commission as Admiral and Captain-General was signed, and though the dockyards were already working at high pressure, the King sent down to urge still greater efforts, since he particularly wanted the fleet to be at Plymouth by August 10.[2]

The only explanation of this date to be found is that two Dutch squadrons were on the point of sailing for their usual station off the Straits. There was no actual arrangement for joint operations, nor much prospect of the seamen of the two nations acting cordially together, owing to the outrageous way in which, in spite of the late treaties, the Dutch continued to behave to English ships in the Far East. Yet experts agreed that the best way to deal with the corsairs was to have two squadrons cruising outside the Straits and two within, and further that August or September was the best time for them to reach the station so as to allow the pirate fleet to leave the

[1] *Aston MSS.* vol. i. (*Add.* 36444) Digby to Aston, May 19. Aston to Digby in reply, fol. 156, and Aston's *Letter Book*, *ibid.* vol. vi. July 9. Buckingham to Gondomar (copy), *ibid.* vol. i. July 19.

[2] Salvetti (*News Letter*, July 20–30 and July 27 to Aug. 6–7) says the rendezvous of the fleet was 'a distant port about eighty miles from here,' i.e. London. His distances are so vague that this is no guide. He calls Windsor a town sixteen or eighteen miles from London. Plymouth was always the final rendezvous of south-going fleets. In a later letter of Aug. 2–12 he calls the port 'Beroclia in the province of Hamptonia.'

Mediterranean for its usual cruise for the Spanish autumn convoys and to prevent its ever getting back.[1] It may, however, be also noticed that at the same time Digby received orders to hold himself in readiness to receive his final instructions as Ambassador Extraordinary to Spain, and at such a moment even the apparent co-operation of the two powers in Spanish waters would not be without its value.[2]

Finally, it was not till September 7 that the fleet got clear of the Thames and came to anchor in the Downs—behind time it is true, but not more so than was usual even in the best days of Elizabeth. The Dutch were as much behindhand as the English. On August 8 Carleton at the Hague had sent over word that a deputation of the States had waited on him to say that they were going to send a fleet of twenty sail against the Algerines under Haultain, Admiral of Zeeland, which was to sail early in October. As the King was doing the same, they hoped the two fleets might act as one, and if he consented they were ready to instruct their officers accordingly. To this humble proposal the King returned an equally condescending answer. He reminded them of the coldness with which they had received a similar proposal when he was graciously pleased to make it, and of their outrageous behaviour to his subjects in the East Indies. Still, if they really were in earnest, in the cause of Christendom he was ready to forget and forgive. Only they had to some extent lost their chance. He was now sending his fleet into the Mediterranean under a definite agreement with the King of Spain. He was no longer free to make engagements with other states for assistance. Still, if the two fleets did happen to meet, he for his part would not refuse their help in so good a cause.[3]

The two fleets did happen to meet, and that very quickly. In the Downs Mansell found a squadron of sixteen Zeeland ships under Haultain. Twenty more from

[1] See Monson's advice to the Council, 1617, *Tracts*, p. 251. And cf. Advice of a Seaman (Math. Knott, gent.), touching the expedition intended against the Turkish Pirates, 1634,' *Harl. MSS.* 6893.

[2] Salvetti, July 20–30. Digby did not in fact leave England till the following year, and then not for Spain.

[3] *Carleton Letters*, pp. 485, 491.

Holland were daily expected, but they intended to sail independently because, although they were commanded by a vice-admiral only, they would not sail under a Zeeland admiral, nor would the Zeeland admiral give up the prerogative of his superior rank. The wind was foul and Mansell seized the opportunity to come up to London with all his captains to bid the King farewell and also to seek final instructions as to how he was to act. This was probably the main reason. Mansell's commission contemplated, as the central operation, a demand of satisfaction, supported by a demonstration before Algiers, and to be followed in certain eventualities by an attempt to destroy their ships within the mole. The Dutch, on the other hand, like all the English experts, condemned the attempt, and were unanimously in favour of achieving their end by systematic cruising in the open sea. Thus the two admirals must have found themselves from the outset faced with a difficulty which, unless removed, would render concerted action almost impossible. There was, moreover, the further uncertainty that Gondomar was still holding back, and no definite agreement had been come to with Spain. The King was at Windsor, and it was a week or more before Mansell and his troop of captains regained the fleet. They brought with them full and detailed instructions for the conduct of the expedition, but in the interval they had missed a wind, and the Dutch had apparently passed on.[1]

Then followed weeks of waiting. No news came up from Plymouth that the fleet had finally sailed. It was a critical delay. The splendid equipment of the ships, wherein, as Salvetti wrote, not even music for dancing was omitted, and the glittering appearance of Mansell and his cavalcade of captains had set every one whispering that something more than pirates was in the wind. Some believed the Court was waiting for news from Germany which might change the fleet's destination. Others scented the influence of the Spanish Ambassador.

[1] Salvetti, *Letters* of September. *The Journal of the Algiers Voyage*, *S.P. Dom.* ccxxii. 70. Mansell's instructions are dated Sept. 10. See *post* pp. 100, 101.

Neither opinion was perhaps groundless. A different destination for the two fleets had actually been suggested from Holland—not officially, but privately by a member of the Government—probably with the intention of feeling the ground. The King, 'according to his wonted sincerity,' chose to appear highly displeased at the proposal, and Carleton had orders to express 'his Majesty's dislike and detestation thereof.' What the obnoxious design was we do not know, but the Spanish Governor of Milan was already stirring about the head of Lake Como with the obvious intention of securing, by the seizure of the Valtelline, an all-Spanish line of communication with Vienna by way of the Tyrol, and the way by which his move could best be parried was a blow at Genoa, the key of the whole route.

As for the part Gondomar was playing, he had succeeded in confirming the King in his faint-hearted ideas. He had persuaded him that his duty to his daughter and his son-in-law extended only to preserving the Palatinate, and not to supporting their usurpation of Bohemia; and further that Spinola's army, which was already in motion, was only intended to support the Emperor's just claims to the disputed kingdom. James indeed was getting more dangerously irresolute than ever. Then, in spite of Gondomar's shameless assurances, came the news that Spinola had actually entered the Palatinate. James was naturally beside himself at the way he had been gulled, and the guilty Ambassador was at his wit's end. From Madrid he had been receiving more urgent orders than ever that Mansell's fleet must on no account be allowed to sail, and here was his royal dupe quite out of hand. The infuriated old King was openly declaring he was going to send an army to his son-in-law's rescue, and the Court was exulting at the prospect of war in the spring.

Gondomar's last hope lay in Digby. Among all the diverse hands that were stirring the seething caldron there was none so masterly as his. No man had kept his head so level or seen his way so clearly how to preserve the peace of Europe with honour and distinction. If any hope in that wave of war fever were to be found, it was

in him, and to him Gondomar played his last card. In pursuance of the King of Spain's agreement for joint action against the pirates, it had been settled that Mansell's fleet was to be allowed the free use of Spanish ports. Gondomar now explained that, in view of the King's hostile attitude, this could not be permitted. An English fleet could no longer be regarded as friendly. It was a clever move, but Digby was equal to it. He pointed out that in the excited state of public opinion the King could not possibly have said less than he had. If Gondomar chose to regard the royal declaration otherwise than as a friendly effort to amuse his anti-Spanish councillors and to preserve peace, it could not be helped, and if he had authority to break with England he had better say so at once. For whatever the King of Spain thought of the fleet, it would certainly sail. It was impossible for the baffled Ambassador to say another word. With Digby in this frame of mind he knew it was useless to protest further. On October 3 Sir Richard Hawkins received his commission as vice-admiral, and a week later, just when the Spaniards were comfortably assuring themselves the danger was over for the season, and had recalled their fleet into Cadiz for the winter, with no prospect of being able to get to sea again before the spring, Mansell cleared the Lizard.[1]

[1] Aston to Digby, Oct. 13. For the other authorities on these negotiations, see Gardiner, *History of England*, iii. 374–5, *note*. *Add. MSS.* 36444.

CHAPTER VIII

MANSELL IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

'In James's unhappy reign,' the highest authority on the period has written, 'the true policy of England is to be found, not in the manifestoes of its sovereign or in the despatches of its ministers, but in the memorials in which Spanish statesmen expressed their apprehension.' As we watch Europe drifting like an ill-steered ship into the whirlpool of the Thirty Years' War, our attention is again and again arrested at points where it seems that a little vigorous and intelligent action on the part of England might have arrested its fatal course. At no point is this consideration so striking as when Mansell put to sea, bound for the Mediterranean. It was the eleventh hour, it is true. Long before the fleet reached its destination the battle of Prague had been fought and the Prince Palatine was a fugitive from his new Bohemian dominions. Still there was time. Winter was at hand to stop further military action; it lay in Spain's power to say that the quarrel must go no further, and Spain, helpless and unprepared, was staring at what it would mean for her upon the sea if she withheld the word to halt.

It is not by its fighting power that the importance of Mansell's little fleet must be measured. For Spain, and indeed for the Empire, it meant something more than the number of its crews and the power of its guns. For Spain it raised the spectre with which she had been haunted ever since Drake had first appeared upon her coasts—the spectre of an alliance between the infidel corsairs and the heretic powers of the North. It was a coalition she knew she dared not face; it was a fear that was not entirely without foundation. It may even be that the suggestion, which on the eve of Mansell's departure reached James from some exalted personage in Holland

and which he so deeply 'disliked and detested,' was something of this nature—something which would at least have rendered the allied fleets independent of Spanish ports. Every one knew of the as yet unratified convention which the Dutch had negotiated with the Barbary states, and Englishmen who were scarcely less well treated by them might easily do the same. Nor must it be forgotten that, when Drake and Norreys were aiming at an occupation of Portugal, and again when Essex had possession of Cadiz, some steps had certainly been taken for using Morocco as a base of supply, and the Christians' overtures had been well received. It was these memories perhaps that forced Philip into agreeing to allow his ports to be used by Mansell's fleet. It would be like a thorn in his side; but better so than to see it acting from Africa. As he well knew, his banished Moriscos were ready to welcome with open arms any one that would help them to their revenge on Spain, and the older race of corsairs were scarcely less ready to avert the anger of the men who had taught them their art and were all they feared upon the sea. This was what the little fleet meant for Spain at a moment when the battle of Prague had raised the war fever in England to boiling point, and when the twelve years' truce with the Dutch had not six months to live.

Nor does this aspect of the expedition represent for us all its importance. Were it only for the poor results it achieved, its fortunes would scarcely be worth following. The dawn of England's career as a Mediterranean power was as unpromising as her first attempts at colonisation. There was no trace discernible of how it was destined to press upon the world and force history into the channels in which it flows to-day. Yet Mansell's fleet was the beginning, and we must see in it the pale dawn of all that it heralded. England was about to step into the primeval arena upon which the greatest dramas of dominion had found their catastrophe. It was here upon the sea which the three continents embraced that empire had broken empire since the ages began in unending strife, and for the first time the British navy was entering its bloodstained waters. For Englishmen at

least it proved to be one of the most momentous departures in history, redeeming a contemptible reign from much of its insignificance; and as we see the little squadron thus trailing, as it were, a fiery wake behind it across the Bay, it glows with an attraction too real and too romantic for us not to linger a while over its fortunes.

The men to whom fell the unrealised distinction of inaugurating the new era were probably the best at the King's disposal. With the two chief flag-officers the only fault to be found was that neither of them had been employed at sea for many years, Mansell not since 1604, when he began his disastrous career as Treasurer of the Navy, and Hawkins not since 1594, when he was taken prisoner during his raid into the South Sea after fighting for three days an overwhelmingly superior force. Since then a quarter of a century had passed. In the interval he had suffered in breach of the laws of war a long and harsh imprisonment in Spain which had severely impaired his health, and he was now nearly sixty years of age. His appointment was no doubt partly due to the influence of the merchants, a committee of whom, in accordance with the precedent of Elizabeth's last years, was acting jointly with the Navy Commissioners in superintending the expedition. He appears to have been highly esteemed in the City, and in these cases the London merchants usually expected to have the naming of the vice or rear admiral in order to insure that their own ships at least should not be entirely at the mercy of courtier officers.[1] Possibly, too, he had the powerful support of the Prince of Wales. Hawkins had just completed his 'Observations' on his voyage into the South Sea, the most valuable work that had yet been written on the naval art, and at his death in 1622 a dedication to Prince Charles was found among his papers.[2]

The rear-admiral was Sir Thomas Button, who had first brought himself into notice when in 1600 the Spaniards occupied Kinsale. He then succeeded in boldly holding the harbour with a single pinnace till reinforce-

[1] See *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, ii. 13, 69, *note*. *The Hawkins Voyages* (*Hakluyt Society*, 1878), Introd. p. xxxviii.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 85, 87.

ments arrived, and since then he had been almost continually employed against pirates in the Narrow Seas. About 1612 he had been sent under the auspices of Prince Henry on an expedition to explore the North-west passage, and had been so far successful as to establish the fact that there was no western outlet from Hudson's Bay. Latterly he had been serving as admiral on the Irish station, and had thrown up his appointment at Mansell's request, expecting to be made his vice-admiral—a claim which after some demur he had handsomely surrendered in Hawkins's favour. Among the ship commanders, though several, like Sir Arthur Mainwaring, appear to have been gentlemen of more spirit and influence than knowledge or experience of their duties, there was a leaven of the best type of Ralegh's men, like Samuel Argall, just home from Virginia, and others like Sir John Fearne and Christopher Harris, who had recently served a valuable apprenticeship as pirate captains themselves.[1]

[1] The full list of the fleet as given in the *Journal of the Algiers Voyage*, *S.P. Dom.* ccxxii. 106, is as under:—

—	Guns	Tons	Men	Commanders
Royal Navy:				
'Lion'	40	600	250	Sir R. Mansell.
'Vanguard'	40	660	250	Sir R. Hawkins.
'Rainbow'	40	660	250	Sir T. Button.
'Constant Reformation'	40	660	250	[Sir] Arth. Mainwaring.
'Antelope'	34	400	160	Sir Hy. Palmer.
'Convertine'	36	500	220	Thos. Love.
Merchantmen:				
'Golden Phœnix'	24	300	—	Sam. Argall.
'Samuel'	21	300	—	Chris. Harris.
'Marygold'	21	260	—	Sir J. Fearne.
'Zouch Phœnix'	26	280	—	John Penington.
'Barbary'	18	200	—	Thos. Porter.
'Centurion'	22	200	—	Sir Fr. Tanfield.
'Primrose'	18	180	—	Sir John Hampden.
'Hercules'	24	300	—	Eusabey Cave.
'Neptune'	21	280	—	Robt. Haughton.
'Merchant Bonaventura'	23	260	—	John Chidley or Chudleigh.
'Restore' (pinnace)	12	130	50	George Raymond.
'Marmaduke' (pinnace)	12	100	50	Thos. Hughes.

All the merchantmen had iron guns, the R.N. brass. The 'Convertine' was Ralegh's 'Destiny,' confiscated.

For his conduct of the expedition Mansell's critics have always treated him with merciless contempt. Their cue is taken from Monson, who, with his usual haste and lack of information, acrimoniously condemned the campaign from beginning to end. It may be doubted, however, whether the blame lay with the admirals. When they returned home they excused their failure on the ground 'that the want of authority and their limited commission was the cause of their ill success.' This, as Monson allows, 'was afterwards admitted by all men'; but he himself, in his ignorance of the dual object of the expedition, treated the plea as absurd. Fortunately, after nearly three centuries of oblivion, a copy of Mansell's instructions has come to light to secure him a fair hearing, and to emphasise the injustice of condemning an admiral's strategy without a full knowledge of the political considerations that deflected it.[1]

Though in form they of course disclose nothing but an intended campaign against the Barbary corsairs, they are framed in such a way as to secure a diversion of the expedition on the shortest possible notice. The admiral is informed that his object is to extirpate pirates, especially in the Mediterranean, whither he is to go direct, taking care to keep as close inshore down the coast of the Peninsula as possible on the look-out for any communication the Ambassador at Madrid may send him. Though no definite arrangement had been come to, he is to hold good correspondence with the Spanish and Dutch fleets, but on no account is he to intervene in their quarrels. In complete disregard of Gondomar's proposals, he was given Gibraltar for his rendezvous, whither he was to proceed as quickly as possible and inquire for orders from Aston. The plan of action enjoined also ignored the suggestions for the fusion of the two fleets, for he was told to leave the Atlantic station entirely to the Spaniards, and take the whole of his force into the Straits. Then we have the important caution that on

[1] *Aston Papers*, vol. ii. f. 15 (*Add. MSS.* 36445). The instructions were signed on Sept. 10, 1620, during Mansell's farewell visit to Windsor.

no account was he to attempt any hostile act against the town or castles of Algiers 'for fear of its strength and the Grand Signior's amity.' He was to proceed by diplomacy, presenting a letter from the King and demanding the surrender of captured ships, the restitution of prize goods, and the release of captives. If he obtained this he might endeavour by force or stratagem to burn the pirate fleet within the mole, but only with great caution, so as not to hazard his Majesty's ships. In cruising he was further cautioned that he was not to go east of Cape Spartivento, at the southern end of Sardinia, unless the weather or a chase compelled him. It will be seen that this prohibition insured as far as possible that his operations should not draw him out of that part of the Mediterranean which lay between Spain and her North Italian possessions, so that his fleet might remain a constant menace if any attempt were contemplated to send assistance to the Emperor by sea. It is equally significant that he was not to risk the fighting efficiency of his fleet by hazardous attacks on pirate ports, and that he was, if possible, to obtain satisfaction without fighting at all. Negotiations would not only serve to keep up the pretence of stopping piracy, but would tend to securing an African base should war break out with Spain. Considering the state of affairs abroad and of public opinion in England when Mansell sailed, nothing was more likely, and we may well believe that the English Government at such a time had no intention of throwing away a fleet in rashly attacking the most ruthless enemy of Spain. With these considerations in mind we may follow the expedition with more sympathy than its commanders have usually received.

On October 29 the fleet made Cape St. Vincent, where Mansell sent ashore for the 'letters of advice' he had been told to expect. He was burning for news. From a ship that followed him he had learnt that, the very day after he sailed, letters in hot haste had come into Plymouth for him from the Court, and they were known to be of the utmost importance, for the messenger rode with a halter

round his neck.[1] But there were no letters awaiting him, and he passed at once to his rendezvous and anchored at Gibraltar. Here he found the Spanish vice-admiral with two galleons, and from him learnt that the pirates had been particularly active, having recently sacked a small Spanish port and threatened Gibraltar itself. But from Aston there was not a word. He resolved to carry on, and, in accordance with his instructions, arranged with the Spanish officer to cruise within the Straits between Gibraltar and Minorca, 'being,' as he says, 'the limits of my charge,' while the Spaniards cruised outside.[2] This was agreed to, and further that Mansell should be allowed to land his sick men at Gibraltar and lodge them in quarters specially prepared for them.

These arrangements completed, Mansell passed on to Malaga, where he met with a most flattering reception from the authorities. Still it was the worst port in the south-east of Spain, and it says little for the good faith of the Spaniards, or their confidence in their allies, that it had been fixed as the headquarters of the English fleet while it was upon the coast. Here the Admiral hoped for his final orders without fail, but not a line had come for him nor a word of the Spanish contingent of oared craft which he had been led to expect. After waiting a day he decided to despatch an officer immediately to the Ambassador at Madrid, and without further loss of time to take a cast up the coast as far as Alicante in search of the pirates who had been so active, and in hopes of finding his instructions there.[3]

On November 7 he sailed with the three squadrons of his fleet disposed in echelon and his starboard and seaward squadron advanced, while the few light craft he had kept close inshore to probe the bays and inlets. Baffling winds were encountered, and it was not till the 19th that he made Alicante without having seen a single pirate sail. It was clear his presence must have frightened them from the coast. At Alicante there was still not a

[1] Mansell to Aston, Nov. 5. *Aston Papers*, vol. i.
[2] Mansell to Calvert, March 15, 1621. *S.P., Spain.*
[3] Mansell to Aston, Nov. 5. *Aston Papers*, i.

line to guide him, and he despatched yet another officer to Cartagena. Nothing is more eloquent of the uncertain object of the expedition than this incessant anxiety for orders. There was still no news of the Spanish contingent, and the Dutch fleet, he heard, having reached Gibraltar after he had left and learned his arrangement with the Spanish admiral, had passed on to Tunis and the Levant. He was thus at a loss what to do; but rather than be idle it was resolved, perhaps not too wisely, to sail at once for Algiers in order to present the King's demands, and in doing so to make a full reconnaissance of the whole position.

There they anchored on November 27 with 'white ensigns flying from the poops of the Admiral and Rear-Admiral,' but without showing other colours or firing any salute. In reply to a flag of truce they were informed that the Pasha had orders from Constantinople to treat with them and furnish supplies. With that negotiations began, and the King's letter was presented. It demanded the immediate surrender of all British prisoners, ships, and goods then in the port, and satisfaction for the hundred and fifty vessels the corsairs had taken or destroyed during the past six years. The answer was that no reply could be given till the Divan had been summoned, and that would take a week. Mansell decided to wait, and so far was he from intending any hostilities that, in view of the dangerous nature of the Road, he struck his topmasts and yards, and made all snug to ride out the negotiations, which threatened to be not a little tedious. No sooner was he thus helpless than vessels began to pass in and out continuously. Having lost all his 'long-boats' in a gale, and being without regular pinnaces, he was powerless to interfere, and he soon ascertained that the Algerines were busy forcing all their best English prisoners aboard and sending them out to sea. Mansell protested, and the corsairs promised to desist, but with no intention of doing so.

Meanwhile six Spanish men-of-war appeared. They excused their intrusion into the English sphere of operations by alleging that they were in chase of some pirates

who had recently taken a large ship off Cartagena; but Mansell was well aware this was not their real object. Six vessels, it will be remembered, was the contingent which Gondomar had demanded should be attached to the British squadron, and there can be no doubt that they had been sent to see what Mansell was doing. Finding him quietly anchored in the road and in constant communication with the shore, their worst suspicions were aroused. The haunting fear that England meant to ally herself with the corsairs hurried them to the conviction that they had caught Mansell in the act of hatching the dreaded plot. In hope apparently of provoking hostilities they opened fire on the batteries of Algiers, but finding this without effect they retired, and without further inquiry held away for Spain to report Mansell's treachery.[1]

Meanwhile, without suspicion of what were the Spaniards' unhandsome intentions, Mansell loyally proceeded with his negotiation. The following day the answer to the King's demands was received. It promised to deliver up the prisoners and begged for the appointment of a consul to settle the other demands. On the morrow forty miserable wretches were sent off, and the admirals saw clearly they were being played with. They resolved, therefore, in order to secure the return of their hostages, and perhaps lull the Algerines into security, to send off a common man who was willing to play the part of Consul. They had ascertained that the English prizes, instead of being prepared for delivery, were being unrigged and unloaded, and that, in spite of the engagement, English prisoners had been continually forced to sea. Clearly more drastic measures would be needed, and after a vigorous protest to the Pasha they held away for Cagliari in Sardinia. Their object was probably merely to get wood and water, for on the wind coming easterly they put about for Minorca, and on December 14 anchored there in Alcudia Bay, fuming at the instructions which forced them to play so tame a part.

[1] Mansell to Aston, Jan. 13, 1621. *Aston Papers*, vol. ii.

It was indeed a lame beginning, and it is impossible not to believe their angry protestation that they would never have been contented to be so baffled had their instructions permitted a rougher answer. They were men, we must remember, who had given plenty of hard blows before, who had come out in the pride and prestige of the new sea power, and surrounded by all the splendour and dignity of the King's service, to show Dutchmen and Spaniards once for all how the vermin of the sea were to be stamped out. They had been insulted and abused, so they said, as never were the bearers of a royal message before. They thirsted for revenge, and, had the least discretion been allowed them, they would certainly have done something to take it there and then. As it was, all they could do was to send home for authority to act with vigour and leave to remain out for another period of six months.[1]

Meanwhile they had no intention of remaining idle. Since they entered the Mediterranean they had learned enough to know how to occupy themselves profitably in the interval. The idea was for the main fleet, as soon as it had revictualled and watered and picked up the supplies and pinnaces which had been promised from England, to return to cruise off Algiers. There it would lie in wait while the pinnaces and promised Spanish oared craft beat up the coast and drove the corsairs into its clutches. They had learned already it was only in the open sea and stormy weather—when they had a whole day to chase, 'and so much wind as to overbear them with sail'—that they could hope to catch the nimble pirates. On Christmas night, as they passed from Alcudia to Alicante, still hoping for orders, they had actually fallen into the middle of a corsair squadron. It was a squally night, and Button had caught one of them within musket shot. Several times he raked her through and

[1] Mansell to Buckingham, Alicante, January 13, 1621, *Harleian MSS.* 1581, f. 70. See also a memorandum concerning proposals for giving him a freer hand, especially 'for his night attempts and for his day battery,' and extending his cruising ground as far east as Cephalonia, in *S.P. Dom.* cxix. 144.

through. The crash of her timbers and the screams of the wounded could be heard in the darkness again and again, yet she and all her consorts escaped. In those confined seas, as Mansell complained, the corsairs could sail the royal ships out of sight in four hours.

The plan proposed might possibly have overcome the difficulty, but it was not destined to be tried. At Alicante there was still no news, and while they lay there at a loss how to act they had to witness the Spaniards boisterously celebrating the battle of Prague and the dethronement of their own Princess Royal. It was a poor substitute for the galleys they expected, and relations between the shore and the ships were far from pleasant. Their annoyance was further aggravated by finding the previously cordial demeanour of the Spaniards had changed to a barely disguised insolence. The ugly report of the Spanish admiral had done its work, and Mansell saw no chance of getting the assistance he required for chastising the arrogance of Algiers. He wrote a strong protest to Aston explaining the whole affair, and begging him to put things right. He assured the Ambassador that, 'contrary to ill-informed opinion of its strength,' Algiers might easily be destroyed by bombardment. He had written to the Lord Admiral to sanction the attempt. All he required was a contingent of galleys and smaller oared craft. 'If,' he said, 'the Spaniards will give us the means as by the capitulations agreed, we will give a greater blow in a day this next spring than all Christendom has done with all their endeavours since the pirates first began to make head.'[1]

Meanwhile, in spite of the ill-behaviour of the Spaniards, he resolved to do his best to protect their commerce; but, though detachments of the fleet were continually putting to sea on tidings of pirates being about, not a single vessel was seen, much less captured.

[1] Mansell to Aston, Jan. 13, 1621, and another later undated, *Aston Papers*, vol. ii. Mansell seems to have thought that a 'capitulation' had been signed, but the paper he inclosed is only a copy of Gondomar's draft proposals with the English counter-proposals in the margin. Aston's report on the Spanish admiral's accusation, *ibid.* 136.

It was not till the second week in January 1621 that the longed-for despatches arrived, just as Mansell was writing off again pleading more earnestly than ever for an enlargement of his powers, so as to cover his intended attack on Algiers harbour. They were dated from England on November 23, and informed him that he was to continue in the Mediterranean for another six months, and that his pinnaces and victuals were coming to Malaga. Hawkins and his squadron were immediately sent thither to receive them and cover that coast till they arrived, while Mansell and Button between them watched Cartagena and Alicante. Still no prizes were met with, and at the end of the month Mansell gave orders for the whole fleet to concentrate on Hawkins at Malaga. On the way thither he fell in with Haultain, the Zeeland Admiral, with seven sail in company. The truce between Spain and Holland was on the point of expiring, and nothing definite had yet been done to secure its prolongation. A renewal of the war was looked for in a few weeks, and Haultain said he had twenty-two vessels in all cruising within and without the Straits. Eager to deal the pirates a blow while the truce lasted, he proposed a joint attack upon Algiers, but this Mansell says he refused; and yet so suspicious were the Spaniards that he was immediately accused of conspiring some new perfidy with the Dutch.[1] Next day he and Button were driven back to Alicante and did not sail again for a week. In the interval Button, active as ever, got in another week's cruise, but still without result. When finally they made Malaga, it was only to be driven to leeward of it and to be compelled to bear up for Gibraltar, and there Hawkins joined in the middle of February with the long expected victuallers and two royal pinnaces. Still Mansell found it impossible to carry out the design as he wished. Without more pinnaces or the Spanish oared contingent, of which nothing had been heard, it would not work, and he resolved to stay cruising where he was, between Gibraltar and Ceuta, till he heard again from England. For nearly a month he held the station with

[1] Mansell to Aston. *Aston Papers*, ii. 152.

squadrons on either side of the Straits while he himself visited Tetuan and endeavoured to wring some satisfaction from the authorities there; but they were as obdurate as at Algiers, and two prizes were all that fell to his captains' luck.

Meanwhile Aston had succeeded in demonstrating to the Government at Madrid the falsity of the charges against Mansell, and had been able to assure him that the promised squadron of galleys was to meet him at Alicante, as well as three brigantines or light galleys from Valencia. To Alicante therefore he hurried, staying on his way to victual at Malaga. It was not till the end of March that he reached his destination, and no galleys were there. It was hardly likely they would be. Spanish business was at a standstill, for Philip III. was just dead and Philip IV. reigned in his stead. Still, the three brigantines were at his service, and there was a fast polacca for sale. The one he bought and the others he chartered, determined, it would seem, to carry out his design on Algiers with or without the galleys. It was at least a bold resolve. The port which had baffled the whole might of the great Emperor Charles V. had come to be let alone. Not even Osuna had dared to touch it, and by all Mediterranean authority it was regarded as a place impregnable to any kind of attack. English merchants who knew it were of the same opinion, but the navy men had looked into it for themselves, and took a hardier view. They had come to teach and not to learn, and they were convinced there was a way of at least drawing its teeth. It is easy to laugh at their insular confidence, but their resolution cannot be dismissed so lightly. Before judging them we should remember the ugly reputation which Algiers had enjoyed, reign after reign, as it sat secure and defiant in the very jaws of the Spanish sea power, and then perhaps we may give Mansell and his officers due credit, not only for their breezy contempt of precedent, but for the care and forethought with which they prepared to prove their case.

The first weeks of April were spent in organising the

fleet for the intended operation. The brigantines and the polacca were armed and manned so as to form with the boats of the galleons the oared squadron which the attempt demanded.[1] The two prizes were prepared as fire-ships, and a quantity of incendiary projectiles, or 'fireworks' as they were then called, manufactured, and the men constantly exercised at the work that lay before them. When all was nearly complete, further letters arrived from England, by way of Malaga, saying that a new consignment of stores had reached that port, and probably authorising Mansell to proceed with his enterprise. At any rate, a week later he sailed for Minorca to take in wood and water, and May 1 was holding away for Algiers. On the 20th they were before the port, and came to anchor in a way which, like everything else in this expedition, points to a growing spirit of order and discipline in the royal service at least equal to anything in the time of Elizabeth. Exact directions had been prepared for every state of the wind, and the evolution was executed with a quite modern exactitude, the King's ships bringing up first to mark the line, and the merchantmen taking up their stations astern of them in the squadron intervals they had left. The line was roughly parallel with the shore, and centred on the Mole, while six merchantmen were told off to ply between the rearmost ship and the shore to prevent any vessel either entering or leaving the harbour.

The harbour itself appears to have been crowded with shipping that had taken refuge there from the operations of the various squadrons that were at work against them, and having thus completely closed the port so that none could escape, Mansell prepared for an immediate attack with his oared squadron. It was organised in two divisions: first the 'boats of execution,' in which were

[1] At this time the Polacre or Polacca, like the brigantine, was an oared vessel, not manned by slaves, but rowed by the crew that worked the sails when the wind was fair. The *Journal* says that this one was of 120 tons, and in his orders to Penington to send a contingent to man it, Mansell calls it the Satia or Polakra (*S. P. Dom.* ccxx. 81). The Saettia was the smallest and swiftest form of such craft. See *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, i. 11. The brigantines had nine oars a side.

included the fire-ships, the brigantines, and the polacca; and secondly seven 'boats of rescue,' which were to support the 'boats of execution' and protect them from an attack by galleys. But towards evening the wind, which had been fair all day, died away, and the attempt had to be deferred. The same thing happened the next night, but on the third day the fair wind held, and the 'boats of execution' advanced. All went well, and the fire-ships were already off the head of the Mole when the wind chopped round and they could advance no further. But the assailants were not yet beaten. Under a heavy fire the oared craft made an attempt to tow the fire-ships forward. It was slow work; the fire grew hotter and hotter, and the men began to hesitate. To tow in the fire-ships in face of such a fire was clearly impossible. For a moment there was thought of a retreat; but Captain Hughes, who had command of one of the brigantines, shouted out to cast off the fire-ships and go in with the boats alone. The advance was immediately resumed, while Hawkins and Button in person went boldly in and brought off the derelict fire-ships. In dashing style the whole of the boats rowed for the fleet, shouting 'King James! King James! God bless King James!' Once alongside the pirate vessels they were masked from the enemy's fire, and they proceeded to bring their 'fireworks' into play. With little loss they succeeded in getting the fleet well alight in seven different places, and then, still shouting triumphantly for King James, they drew off. But, as ill luck would have it, by this time the wind had again completely died away. There was no breeze to nourish the flames, and the fire spread very slowly. As the boats retired the Algerines found heart to come out from their shelter, and poured in so heavy a fire that to return to the smouldering fleet was impossible. Worse still, it began to rain, and the end of it was that the pirates were able to extinguish the flames before much damage had been done. It was a bitter disappointment. The attempt had been well conceived, and carried out with boldness and precision. No blame seems to have attached to any one, nor is it easy to see what more could have been

done. It was sheer ill luck, but the fact remained that the attempt had failed.[1]

Still Mansell did not despair. His fire-ships, by the gallantry of Hawkins and Button, were still intact, his boats were safe, his loss small, and his men still full of spirit. Though he drew off, it was not with the intention of retiring, but apparently because the weather compelled him. Four days after the attempt he issued orders that the fleet was still to keep together in one body, that no wide chasing was to be permitted, and that he was going back to Algiers Road, which was to be the rendezvous so long as they were on the coast, for he intended to pursue the attempt he had begun.[2]

During his absence four pirate vessels had managed to slip in, but two others had been destroyed and another captured, and the Algerine galleys which tried to rescue her beaten off. Mansell's idea was to continue the blockade and watch for another opportunity of sending in his fire-ships. Unhappily the time was past. Some escaped prisoners informed him that the harbour had been securely boomed, and that, as for any hope of more prizes, precautions had been taken all along the coast to warn approaching vessels of their danger. It was not till then that the admirals owned themselves beaten. Disease was daily sapping their strength; it seemed useless to remain, and on June 1 they were heading back for Alicante, where they hoped to hear of reinforcements from home.[3]

[1] The names of the officers who conducted the attack are on record. The fire-ships were commanded by Captains Walsingham and Stokes, the brigantines by Hughes, Tall, and Pepwell, the seven 'boats of rescue' by Captain Frampton (Lieutenant to Hawkins, 'Vanguard'), Captain Winker (Lieutenant to Palmer, 'Reformation'), Captain Turner (Lieutenant to Mansell, 'Lion'), Captain Dodge (Lieutenant to Tanfield, 'Centurion'), Frewen (Lieutenant to Haughton, 'Neptune'), Button (nephew and Lieutenant to Sir Thomas Button, 'Rainbow'), and Captain Boyes.

[2] Order to Penington, May 29, 1621, *S. P. Dom.* cxxi. 56.

[3] The main authority for the above is the *Journal* or log already referred to. A printed copy with sarcastic but not too well-informed notes in John Coke's hand is in *S. P. Dom.* ccxxii. 106. His comments must be received with caution, for during all the last half of 1620 he was on leave attending to his private affairs in the country, and was apparently ignorant of the

As things stood when they had left England, the idea had certainly been that the fleet was to be continually nourished with fresh ships and supplies in order that it might remain in the Mediterranean for at least three years, till the pirate power was broken, or so long as it seemed desirable to threaten Spain. During the spring of 1621 two fine galleons, the 'Victory' and 'Dreadnought,' had actually been put in commission for the purpose. In May the merchants were called upon to maintain their ships on the station for six months longer, and at the end of the month the captains of the two King's ships received their orders to join. Then suddenly a change came over the situation. Gondomar had never ceased to protest and cajole until finally he had succeeded in winning over Buckingham as securely as he had gained the King. In this difficult task the Spaniard's persuasive personality was assisted by the folly of the Dutch. Their behaviour in the East Indies was growing daily more intolerable. In spite of treaties and promises, they continued impudently to assert their right to exclude English vessels from the most profitable trading areas, and to assert it with every kind of outrage. This was England's reward for having kept

restrictions under which Mansell had sailed (see *Coke MSS.*, *Hist. MSS. Com.* XII. i. 208–9). The author of the *Journal* is unknown, but internal evidence shows that he was in Hawkins's squadron aboard Arthur Mainwaring's ship, the 'Constant Reformation,' until early in April that officer died of disease at Malaga. Palmer succeeded Mainwaring, and requested the author to remain with him, but he preferred to go to Sir Francis Tanfield in the 'Centurion,' a merchantman. Monson's criticism (*Tracts*, p. 256), from which later writers have usually taken their cue, appears no less unfair and ill-informed than Coke's when compared with the *Journal* and the despatches. The principal ones are as follows:—Three from Mansell to Buckingham, dated January 13, June 9, and July 10, in *Harleian MSS.* 1581; another in *S.P. Foreign, Barbary States* (dated July 17); two others to the Lords Commissioners (*ibid.*), one dated conjecturally 'December 1620,' but probably about January 12, 1621, since in his despatch of January 13 Mansell says he had just finished it, and the other dated July 16; one to Calvert, Secretary of State in *S.P. Spain* dated March 15. Two others to Cranfield, dated January 22 and March 15, are among the *De la Warr Papers* (*Hist. MSS. Com.* iv. 282 *b*). Three orders issued to Penington, giving further details of the movements of the fleet, are in *S.P. Dom.* cxx. 81 (April 12) and 112 (April 25); cxxi. 56 (May 29). The *Aston Papers* contain many documents besides those already quoted which throw much new light on the whole affair.

the seas for them through the long years of their struggle for independence; this was her reward for having supported the first halting steps of their sea power, and suffered it to grow up under the shelter of her own. England had stood loyally beside her, pouring out blood and treasure for the freedom of the high seas, and the first use the Dutch sought to make of their success was to force themselves into the exclusive position from which Spain had been dragged. There was an old superstition, well known to seamen, that if you save a man from drowning he will one day do you some fatal injury. The adage seemed coming true for England and Holland, and already the winds were whispering that before England could be a power in the Mediterranean she must establish her dominion of the North Sea. The struggle was to be long and bloody, and its first mutterings were in the air.

Gondomar was not a man to miss his hour. Buckingham's pride as Lord High Admiral was such that he was coming to regard every injury to a British ship as a personal affront. It was easy for the skilled Ambassador to foster his annoyance till he persuaded him that it was far better to use the royal ships in chastising the insolent Burghers than in keeping them out on a service which his master could only view with distrust and dislike. The result was that when Mansell reached Alicante he found neither 'Victory' nor 'Dreadnought.' In their place were orders to send home at once four of the King's ships. With the whole fleet he went round to Cadiz, whence, the second week in July, he despatched Hawkins and Button homewards. With them went the 'Lion,' 'Rainbow,' 'Reformation' and 'Antelope,' and some of the less seaworthy merchantmen, while with the rest Mansell remained where he was to await stores and orders.

Having thus reduced his force to a point at which they had nothing to fear from it the Spaniards became all politeness. Eager to see him spend his strength on the common enemy, they offered him everything he wanted, and a whole squadron of galleys if he would again attack

Algiers. Mansell was nothing loath. An officer was sent to Madrid to arrange the affair, orders were issued for a galley squadron to mobilise at Malaga in accordance with Mansell's desire, and so well was he supplied from the Cadiz stores that on the last day of July he was able to sail for Gibraltar to join hands with the galleys.[1]

Meanwhile relations with the Dutch were going from bad to worse. Their truce with Spain had come to an end; the old war was raging again, and ever since its renewal they had been seeking to establish a commercial blockade of the Spanish Netherlands. International law on the subject was not so clear then as it is now, and James, hurt in his dignity as Lord of the Narrow Seas, would not admit their right to stay anything but enemy's goods and contraband of war. It was a disagreement for which there was no solution but force, and the result was that Hawkins and Button, on their way home, received orders to intercept the homeward-bound Dutch East India fleet by way of reprisal. Nor was this all. James's genius for putting himself in the wrong, and playing false cards, prompted him to send orders to Mansell to bring home the rest of his fleet to guard the Narrow Seas. Nothing could have been more ill-timed. In Vienna was Digby on his hopeless mission for the restoration of the Palatinate to the King's son-in-law, and for the removal of the Imperial ban. Having succeeded in getting a partial suspension of hostilities from the Emperor, he was about to proceed to Madrid in pursuance of the King's orders, and, feeling acutely the weakness of his hand, was imploring James to keep Mansell where he was. Even as the admiral's recall was being penned he was writing his urgent appeal: 'I must earnestly,' he said, 'recommend the continuing abroad yet for some small time of Sir Robert Mansell's fleet upon the coast of Spain, which, in case his Majesty should be ill-used, will prove the best argument he can use for the restitution of the Palatinate.' The King, it would seem, repented of his haste and made

[1] Mansell to Aston, July 4 and 31; Aston to Buckingham, July 26; Sir John Fearne's instructions for Madrid; *Aston Papers*, ii.

an effort to recall the false step he had taken. But even so it was only in a way that added degradation to his fatuity. Gondomar was consulted as to whether his master would take it ill if Mansell remained on the station. Seeing what was going on in Spain, the Ambassador had naturally no objection to offer. Indeed he wished for nothing better. His only aim had been to reduce Mansell to impotence, not to remove him altogether, and he had overshot the mark. He hastened therefore to explain that his master had no objection whatever to the operations against the pirates being continued. Indeed he begged that the two royal galleons and the ten merchantmen that had remained with Mansell might keep the seas. His master, he said, had already provided the admiral with fire-ships and combustibles to renew his attempt, and he was ready to see him furnished with provisions till they could be supplied from home. James replied that his reason for recalling Mansell was merely that his brother of Spain seemed jealous of the enterprise, and agreed to send orders for him to continue his operations.[1] Whether or not this apparent complacency on James's part was to cover a resolution to support Digby at Madrid with a fresh naval demonstration, it was already too late to recover the lost ground. On September 15 the Order in Council was passed, calling on the merchants to provide their ships for a further period of service, and a week later Mansell, in answer to his original recall, appeared in the Downs with all his following.

So ended the first attempt of a British Government to influence the European situation by the presence of a royal fleet in the Mediterranean. It is remembered now only for its failure at Algiers, a failure that a little luck would have turned to a memorable success, and perhaps reacted on the policy of Spain in a way that cannot now be measured. At the time the true significance of Mansell's fleet was recognised in all the cabinets concerned. The Spanish Ambassador indeed seemed to

[1] Calvert to Cranfield, *De la Warr Papers*; *Hist. MSS. Com.* iv. 305*a*, September 12, 1621; and Gardiner, iv. 227.

measure his success by his power of controlling its action and its energy, and, little as it accomplished, the lesson was never forgotten, either at home or abroad; nor from that time forth did the potentiality of English action in the Mediterranean ever cease to be a factor in European diplomacy.

CHAPTER IX

RICHELIEU'S INVITATION

For the time Gondomar's dexterity had removed the fear of English action in the Mediterranean from the counsels of the Hapsburg alliance, but from the day Mansell passed the Straits it was never lost sight of. For two years more James and his Government continued to be amused with the prospect of a Spanish marriage that was to give peace to Europe, and the British navy danced attendance; but no sooner did the return of Prince Charles and Buckingham from Spain, empty-handed, make war inevitable than the idea immediately recurred. Still it was not in England that the situation was first appreciated. Elizabethan traditions were still vigorous, and Mansell's venture had done little to break them. For the most part English naval strategists were still where Drake had left them, and the idea of war with Spain was still war as Drake had made it. It was abroad, where the Hapsburg alliance was pressing most severely, that the changed conditions were best understood.

In the two years of James's inaction the alliance had made formidable strides. Heidelberg had fallen and the Palatinate was completely lost, and even in the far North the Scandinavian powers were beginning to see their neighbour's wall was on fire. From Antwerp to Seville the Hapsburg territory was now a continuous whole. The Valtelline, which formed the connecting link by way of the Tyrol, had been seized, and though there had been a pretence of surrendering it to the custody of the Pope, it was still occupied by Spanish troops. There was thus a channel through which, by way of Genoa and Milan, the wealth of the Indies and all that it meant could freely

pass to nourish the resources of the Empire and feed the war in Central Europe. If the Scandinavian powers began to take alarm, no less so did France, as the revived Hapsburg system embraced her in an ever tightening grip, and her fears were shared by the other two Catholic opponents of Spain, Venice and Savoy.

The success of the Hapsburg alliance had placed it at last in antagonism to all the rest of Europe. But it was not a solid opposition, and there was the weak point. It was broadly divided into two great camps, the Protestants to the North and the Catholics to the South, and each group had naturally a different view of the way in which the great alliance was to be fought. The Protestant group inclined to what might be called a frontal attack on the Empire, which, by military operations from the northward, would force Austria to recoil within its old lines. The Catholic powers, on the contrary, saw the vital point in the centre, as was natural from their position, and they would have sought to break the alliance at the joint. The weak points in the Hapsburg chain were the Valtelline, as it lay threatened by all three powers of the Catholic group, and the Western Mediterranean, where at Genoa the link between Madrid and Milan lay open to naval attack. The eyes of France were fixed upon the Valtelline; those of Savoy, as always, upon Genoa; but in neither case exclusively, for an attack on either point would so materially assist the other that they formed practically one operation. Each group was naturally anxious to see the weight of England thrown upon its own chosen objective, and James was soon besieged with contradictory proposals for a common effort against the common foe.

At first the line of action most favoured by the British Government was that of the Northern Protestants; but this did not exclude the possibility of persuading Savoy and Venice to reopen their old harassing at the centre, and thither, as early as 1624, was sent Sir Isaac Wake 'to encourage' them to play their part. His first point was Turin, the Duke of Savoy's capital, and there the timid diplomat found himself handling thunderbolts

before he had time to turn round. No sooner did he arrive than the Duke began pressing on him the old Genoa scheme of Ralegh's time. 'There is no need to encourage him,' groaned the overweighted envoy; 'his pulse doth beat so strong of itself.' In vain he tried to get on to Venice. The Duke would not let him go. He was entirely confident of success. He had charts, plans, and models of the city, and would not part with the Englishman till he had laid the complete scheme before him. It was some time before he could do this, for France was equally hot for her own design, and each state was trying to see how deeply she could get the other committed before she showed her own hand. At last, in August, Wake was able to send home the complete proposal. Fifty thousand foot were to be raised and paid, half by England and half by Savoy; three thousand cavalry were to be provided by Savoy, and, as their equivalent, England was to equip a fleet of twenty sail. James's name need not appear unless he liked. All he provided could be under his son-in-law's flag; and as for Venice, he need have no anxiety, for she too would have to play her part. Genoa at this time was for all purposes of foreign policy a mere protectorate of Spain. Therefore, although an attack on her by Savoy would not be technically a breach with the Hapsburgs, it would be so in effect. It would be like thrusting a firebrand into the centre of the inflammable heap, and would serve to set on fire the whole of Europe that was not already blazing. Venice must come in with the rest; and as for France, she was only waiting for Savoy to begin the dance. Such was the incendiary proposal which Wake had to send home, begging that, if it were accepted, some one more capable and with stronger nerves might be sent to take his place.[1]

The scheme, however, was not immediately accepted. To gain time for reflection Wake was instructed to apply for further details, especially in regard to its financial aspects. The fact was that the British Government had another iron in the fire, which promised to burn deeper

[1] *S.P. Foreign, Savoy*, Aug. 9, 1624.

than Savoy. No sooner had the failure of Charles and Buckingham at Madrid given the death-blow to the weary Spanish marriage than negotiations were reopened for finding the Prince a bride in France. In November the preliminary treaty was signed, and by its terms England and France were allies for the subversion of the Hapsburgs. In the meantime France had formed a definite league with Savoy and Venice for wresting the Valtelline from Spanish hands, and the first advantage she meant to draw from the proposed marriage was to add England to the party. This was Richelieu's idea of meeting the threatened domination of the House of Austria—undoubtedly more sound and comprehensive than James's narrow aim at the recovery of the Palatinate and the restoration of the *status quo* in Germany. If the Hapsburg structure could be severed at the centre, the rest would easily follow. All that seemed necessary to insure success was to prevent Spain using the advantage of her command of the Western Mediterranean to paralyse the action of Savoy. The fitful maritime power which France from time to time had painfully created on her Southern coast had sunk again to its lowest ebb. Without the aid of the Northern sea powers it was clear Spain must retain her command and the freedom of her communication with Italy; and so it came about that of all the far-reaching consequences that were to flow from the mating of the sparkling little French princess with James's solemn son, none were of deeper significance than the first. For it was nothing else than an invitation from France to England that she should assert her yet unmeasured influence on continental policy by naval operations in the Mediterranean.

If ever a great minister's dreams are haunted with dim visions of what his policy may breed far beyond the limits of his furthest sight, surely Richelieu must have lain uneasy the night he let the proposal go. He might have seen that sea, which seemed made as a bridge for France to march to empire, disturbed with the passage of mighty fleets that were to change its nature—turning it to a fosse which barred her progress and

thrust her back to wither upon the exhausted soil of her birthright.

As it was, the proposal came humbly enough to give no hint of all it might mean. It was in the form of a suggestion from Marshal Lesdignières, the officer in command of the French army which was assembling to support the Duke of Savoy in his projected attack on Genoa. The suggestion was addressed to the Netherlands as well as England, and was purely naval in character. England was to incur no expense and no responsibility. All that was asked was that the King of France should be allowed to hire twenty ships of war in each country. They were to sail under the French flag, and to be in all respects a French force. The Dutch at once consented. Buckingham, whose imaginative mind was filled with the most grandiose ideas for the coming war, easily persuaded James to do the same. It was therefore understood that the French marshal, in his forthcoming filibustering attack on Genoa, was to have twenty English men-of-war at his disposal.

This was in the winter of 1624. In spite of the despairing efforts of Spain to avert the threatened conflagration, every one believed it would break out in the ensuing spring. In England a great fleet was to be mobilised for immediate action, but at present no one knew what its destination would be. Following Elizabethan precedent, the direction of all operations for the recovery of the Palatinate had been placed in the hands of a supreme Council of War. It numbered among its members the best of the later Elizabethans: St. John, Lord Deputy of Ireland; George Carew, who had saved Munster from Spain in 1600; Fulke Greville, Sidney's old companion, together with the most accomplished and experienced soldiers of the new school that had grown up in the Low Countries under the Fighting Veres. The naval members were Mansell and Button, the best that were to be had since Richard Hawkins was dead. Their influence upon England's attitude was something more than consultative, for in effect they were trustees of the funds which the Commons had voted for the war.

In a bold effort to grasp a part of the executive power, which had always been the King's, the House had sought to lay down the broad lines on which the war was to be conducted. This was the famous resolution of 'the Four Points.' James, fixed to his narrow view of recovering the Palatinate, was obstinately bent on confining the war to military operations in Germany, and on offending Spain as little as possible. Parliament, believing Spain was still the all-powerful instrument of all the trouble, and instinctively feeling the strength of England was on the sea, was as earnestly opposed to distant military adventures and as obstinately bent on reviving the old war which James had so prematurely closed. The four points for which they stipulated were the setting in order of the coast defences, making provision for the security of Ireland, assisting the Dutch with troops, and mobilising the navy. In short, they were set upon a war conducted exactly on the old Elizabethan lines—that is, in effect, a defensive war tempered by remunerative operations against Spanish trade and colonies. Of the changed situation which had been brought about by the increased power of the Empire and her chief allies they were in apparent ignorance. The King of course would not accept the position they arrogated. He told them it was enough that the money they voted could not be touched without the consent of the Treasurers whom they were to appoint; but as for the conduct of the war, that must depend on the advice of the Council of War. 'Whether,' said he, 'I shall send twenty thousand or ten thousand, whether by land or sea, east or west, by diversion or otherwise, by invasion upon the Bavarian or the Emperor, you must leave that to the King.' And so indeed it was left, the arrangement being that the Parliamentary Treasurers were to issue money on the warrant of the Council of War, and not otherwise.

The French proposal, therefore, was outside the view of either party, and yet it fell in with both. For James it would be a valuable diversion in favour of the land operations for the recovery of the Palatinate; for the popular view it was naval, productive, and valuable as

a preoccupation for the Spanish fleet. For the King it had the special recommendation of enabling him in some small degree to do his duty to his son-in-law without openly breaking with Spain. No step could be more characteristic, and it was practically the last he took. It was the end of March 1625, and already as the sound of war grew loud in his ears he lay upon his death-bed tormented with the din he could not hush. The southern counties were swarming with unruly recruits who were to serve abroad under Count Mansfeldt. The ports were crowded with clamouring skippers whose vessels had been requisitioned as transports. Twelve ships of the royal navy were being equipped for their escort and some further great adventure, and the squadron that was to pass into the French service was being pushed on. And so at last, amid the noise and disturbance of vast preparations for the war, which he had disgraced himself to prevent, the fever-stricken King passed away.

Every scheme to which he had set his hand most devoutly had failed—everything, perhaps, except the regeneration of the navy. The five years which the Commission had given itself to do the work were past, and the programme had been carried out to the letter. In spite of the extraordinary calls that had been made upon them by Mansell's expedition and Charles's escapade to Spain, the fleet had been kept in good order; ten new ships had been added to it, and the expense reduced by about a half. However barren of purpose James's reign may appear, this must never be forgotten. The navy had been placed on a businesslike footing, and had been confirmed as the pride and mainstay of the country. Of his position as Lord of the Narrow Seas James was at least as proud as of his pose as head of the reformed religion. His interest in the navy had never flagged. He sat in person to decide disputes on the most technical questions; he never missed a launch; he made his second son Lord High Admiral, and only displaced him when he became Prince of Wales to make room for his chosen favourite. Less consciously, but still as the direct result of his trust in the navy, he inaugurated a new

field for its action. Feebly as the new policy had been started, it was a precedent that had been set. The door was opened never to be entirely shut. In spite of failure and disappointment, one of the last acts of his well-meaning reign had been to push his sea power forward on its new career, and on his troubled death-bed he had once more stretched out his shaking hand in answer to the calling of the Mediterranean.

CHAPTER X

NAVAL STRATEGY UNDER CHARLES I.

No king perhaps ever succeeded quietly to a throne with such a sea of troubles boiling round him as did Charles, and the first to scald him was the question of the squadron with which England was to make herself felt in the Mediterranean.

When the idea was first mooted, there can be no doubt that there was a real intention to use the force for breaking into the centre of the Hapsburg position through Genoa. But, before the agreement had been signed, France had had forced upon her a wholly different use for it. In January 1625 the Duke of Soubise, the great Huguenot chief, exasperated with the King's failure to carry out the terms of the late pacification, had suddenly thrown himself upon Blavet, the new head-quarters of the French navy, and had carried off into Rochelle all the six royal vessels he found there. By April the Huguenots were once more in open rebellion; and all hope of reducing Rochelle to obedience was gone unless a fleet could be procured. There could be no doubt, therefore, how Louis would use the borrowed ships if he got them. Still, for the Dutch it was too late to draw back. In the throes of their new contest with Spain, which so far had not gone too well with them, they dared not offend France, and Louis had the prospects of a fresh pacification with his Protestant rebels to make their consent easy. So the Dutch contingent sailed, and at its head was Haultain, Vice-Admiral of Zeeland.

For England, in the toils of her new alliance with the French Crown, there was scarcely less difficulty; and when, on the eve of the old King's death, Buckingham agreed

to lend the 'Vanguard' of the royal navy and seven merchantmen, he must have known their destination. If at the time his airy assurance and indifference to public opinion had seen no difficulties in the path, they began quickly to spring into view. In April Sir John Penington, who was to command, was ready for sea; but Sir Ferdinando Gorges, his vice-admiral, could not be got to join. He had been Elizabeth's Governor of Plymouth, and was a personification of all the Protestantism militant of her reign. It was not till the admirals had been assured that they would not have to fight Huguenots that they could be got to take the squadron across to Dieppe. Still, both officers and men were far from easy, and, as the day approached for Parliament to meet, Buckingham himself became nervous. He tried to gain time by informing the admiral he was not to give up the squadron till he had escorted the new Queen to England. On June 9 Penington at last sailed; but no sooner was he in contact with French conversation than his eyes were opened. Till he had further orders he refused to have any dealings with the French officers who were commissioned to take over the ships, and, finally winding a design to seize his squadron, he quietly put to sea and returned to the English coast.

Meanwhile Parliament had met and had received the statement of the Government. There had been a suggestion of further subsidies, but it had fallen flat, and there was clearly trouble ahead. Before a new money grant could be considered, there were inquiries to be made. The war policy, which the Commons had so clearly defined in the resolution of the Four Points, had practically been set at nought. Their Council of War had been induced to grant subsidies and raise an army for operations in Germany, which was what they particularly intended to forbid. The naval forces had been mobilised, but not in the way they had plainly indicated. They had intended the mobilisation as a precautionary measure in view of the powerful fleet that had then been assembling in Spain; but it was now known that that fleet had sailed to dispossess the Dutch from the lodgment they had made in

Brazil, and all fear of an invasion was at an end. Still an enormous fleet was being prepared clearly for some offensive operations, for ten thousand troops were being pressed, and transports taken up wholesale. Who had sanctioned it? What was the enemy? No war had been declared, and part at least of the naval forces were going to assist a Catholic king who was at war with his Protestant subjects. Vast sums had been spent for the recovery of the Palatinate, and less than no good done. The army that had been raised for Mansfeldt had rotted away from neglect and disease, and, in spite of the crowd of ships that had been so long in commission, the Salee pirates were swarming in the Narrow Seas and insulting the very coasts.

It was clear something must be done to mend matters. The plague was raging in London, and the occasion was seized to adjourn Parliament to meet at Oxford on August 1. Still it was by no means easy to know what to do in the meantime with Penington. He had to be ordered back to Dieppe, and yet could not be allowed to give up his ships. The only solution that occurred to the Government was to instruct him to get his men to mutiny. This he did with no little success as soon as he reached Dieppe, and on July 25 his crew carried their officers back again to England. Meanwhile, however, peace had been signed with Rochelle. Lesdignières had rapidly driven the Spanish garrisons from the Valtelline, and with his colleague of Savoy had overrun the Genoese territory almost to the gates of the capital. But there he was checked. He knew it was madness to attempt the city itself without support from the sea, and with all the weight of his name he had been pressing for an accommodation with the Huguenots in order that the borrowed fleet might still be placed at his disposal. Now, therefore, that peace was made, Richelieu was able to assure the English Government that their ships would certainly be used in the Mediterranean according to the original plan, and Penington received final orders to deliver them up. The transfer actually took place on August 3, but the crews absolutely refused to serve, and the French got only the

bare ships, nor indeed all of them, for Sir Ferdinando Gorges, staunch to his faith, was not to be persuaded, and deserted ship and all.

Thus the most pressing cause of offence was removed; but no sooner had Parliament reassembled than it was clear the way was barely smoothed. The great expedition with its hundred sail and ten thousand troops had still to be explained. It had certainly been Buckingham's intention that it should sail and win him glory before Parliament could meet, and to this end the Houses had been twice prorogued. He intended to take the command himself, under a commission from the Prince Palatine, so as to avoid as long as possible a formal rupture of the peace between England and Spain. The original idea had been apparently something in Drake's manner on the Spanish coast. Then he had tried to persuade the Prince of Orange into a joint attack on the Spanish Netherlands.

The main inducement to the latter line of action was the growing menace of Dunkirk. During the peace, Spain had been making serious efforts to increase her sea power, and among other means had instituted a system of *almirantazgos*, whereby chartered trading companies in return for their privileges were called upon to maintain a war-fleet. One of these, to the number of twenty-four sail, was now established at Dunkirk, where naval architecture and seamanship had reached a point unsurpassed in Europe.[1] The Dutch were blockading it with fair success, but, so long as the Dunkirk squadron existed, the command of the Narrow Seas was not secure. The destruction of the port was in fact an operation of the first importance. Sound strategy demanded it as a necessary preliminary to the effective conduct of the war on whatever lines it was eventually to be waged, and so keen was Buckingham on the new project that he actually went over to Paris to induce Louis to co-operate. The mission was a complete failure. So far from succeeding in dragging France into a war with Spain, he entirely alienated the French King by making love to his wife. So, before Parliament met, the

[1] Duro, iv. 11.

new project had been abandoned and he had gone back to the vague intentions of a campaign to the southward.[1]

It was to provide against inexperienced levity of this kind that Parliament had sought to tie the all-powerful Lord Admiral's hands with a board of experts; and no sooner did the question of supply come up again than it was roundly suggested that the expedition had never been sanctioned or even considered by the Council of War. The only member of it sitting in the House was Sir Robert Mansell. It was a direct challenge to him to speak, but he held his peace while the debate waxed hotter and hotter. At length he could contain himself no longer. It was to Buckingham he owed his fall from power, and he rose to deal his supplanter a blow from which he never really recovered. There had, he said, been some meetings of the Council, but he had not been present at any since February last. At that time the question of levying an army to accompany the fleet had been raised, and he had refused to vote upon it, because Sir John Coke, a minister and partisan of Buckingham's, was present, and he was not a member of the Council. He appears, however, to have intimated that he regarded the force proposed to be too small to effect anything, and a useless expense. He had an alternative project of his own which he was certain would do more for the Palatinate than anything that could be hoped from the plan before them. Conway, however, who, though also a Secretary of State, was on the Council of War, had cut him short by saying that the question before the Council had been merely what arms they were to sanction for the force. Whether it was to be raised or not was not for them to discuss, and thereupon Mansell appears to have retired. This was probably just the kind of thing the House had suspected, and so deep was the sensation made by Mansell's speech that they immediately adjourned the debate. On the morrow, to make matters worse, there came up lamentable reports of the havoc the Salee pirates and Dunkirkers had been committing on British

[1] Gardiner, v. 325 *et seq.* 'Buckingham's Instructions,' May 1625, *Coke MSS.* p. 201.

subjects. The navy ships had done next to nothing, and Mansell protested it was their orders that were at fault, and again the Council of War had not been consulted. Everywhere upon the high seas and even in their own waters Englishmen had been treated with contempt, and not a single insult had been resented. Fuel was added to the fire till it blazed out in Sir Francis Seymour's cry, 'Let us lay the fault where it is. The Duke of Buckingham is trusted. It must needs be him or his agents.'

The crisis was fast growing in intensity, and the next day the Solicitor-General was put up to answer Mansell's accusation. But though he made it appear that the only reason why Mansell had not been further consulted was that he had absented himself from the sittings out of pique, he could not show the design in hand had ever been sanctioned by the Council of War. Mansell's reply was that of a man broken and crushed by a grievance. He was obliged to admit he had a private quarrel with the Duke; he whined querulously of his ancestors, of their devotion to the Crown, and his own; he cried for an inquiry into his conduct at Algiers; he vowed that he would make it good with his life that Buckingham's expedition, manned and victualled as it was, was doomed to failure; and wound up protesting he neither desired the good will nor feared the hatred of the great Duke, but, sailor-like, only wished to do his duty. The impression he made was not good. Yet it was none the less clear that the Government had refused to listen to the scheme of the Vice-Admiral of England, who was also the only man on the Council of War with any long naval experience; that they had pursued a plan which he pronounced ridiculous; that they had concealed from him the design which was finally adopted; and that, in answer to his protest, he had been told the plan of campaign lay with Buckingham, not with the board of experts to whom Parliament had specially confided the direction of the war. If Mansell's position had been shaken, that of the King and Buckingham was made no firmer, and the broken admiral sat down among whispers that Charles had already made out a commission for a dissolution. It was true enough.

Buckingham could face no more, and, before anything could be done, Charles's first Parliament had ceased to exist.[1]

So without money, counsel, or settled purpose the expedition went forward. September came, and the fleet still lay huddled in Plymouth, unable to sail. The season had passed, according to all Elizabethan precedent, for such an expedition: the soldiers were dying in hundreds of the plague, and yet Buckingham clung obstinately to his idea. What it was nobody knew, if indeed he knew clearly himself. The West Indies, the Azores, the Canaries, the ports of the Spanish Atlantic seaboard—all were discussed and their chances reckoned. Some even still believed that something in the Mediterranean was the object. The best naval opinion knew that an attack upon Genoa from the sea was impracticable unless an adequate base for the fleet could be first established in the vicinity. Such a base either Corsica or Sardinia would furnish, and the occupation of either of those islands was well within the capacity of the expedition.[2] Yet there can be no doubt that such an objective had never been seriously contemplated, and the fact that it was mentioned is therefore the more interesting as showing how small was the importance as yet attached to the strategical possibilities of the Mediterranean by English experts. It is of course possible that this or something like it was Mansell's alternative proposal, but of this we know nothing. Monson, who by this time had developed into a very advanced theorist, certainly rejected the notion. But it must be said for him that he rejected it in favour of a proposal still more sound.

The eyes of the old Elizabethan admiral were fixed on the Spanish navy, and he saw it at the mercy of the English fleet. During the recent reorganisation of the Spanish maritime forces, they had been greatly strengthened, and, at least on paper, Spain had never been so powerful at sea. Besides the three local squadrons of the North, provided similarly to those of our own Cinque Ports by the provinces of Guipuscoa, Biscay,

[1] Gardiner, *Debates in the House of Commons*, 1625, C.S. 1873, pp. 115, 123, 147, 161.

[2] Monson, *Tracts*, p. 262.

and Galicia, three royal squadrons were established—one for the Crown of Castile of forty-six sail, another for Portugal of ten sail, and the third for Flanders of twenty sail. From these a permanent fleet of twenty sail was established for the Straits, and the rest formed the Ocean Guard. Besides these there was also the formidable Neapolitan squadron, which was composed of Osuna's old fleet under his Admiral Ribera. The system was so far complete that when, in May 1624, the Dutch East India Company seized San Salvador in Brazil, a fleet of fifty-two sail with twelve thousand men had been sent to recover it before the year was out. Still it was not till the end of April 1625 that the invading force, which consisted of Dutch, English, and Germans, was forced to capitulate, and the victorious fleet, exhausted or unseaworthy with its prolonged effort, was coming home. This was known in England during the summer, and in Monson's eyes the obvious thing to do was to dismiss the troops and transports, as Essex had done in 1597, and despatch a purely naval force to surprise and crush the homeward bound Spanish fleet at the Azores. Such a blow would have been the most severe that Spain could receive. Theoretically Monson's idea was obviously right, but there were reasons why, even if it had been adopted, success was far from assured.

Strange as it may seem, although the fleet at Plymouth was one of the most powerful that had ever been fitted out for such a service in England, it had not a single admiral on its staff. Mansell and Button were both more or less in disgrace, Sir Richard Hawkins was dead, Monson was not even consulted, while Palmer and Penington were employed in the Narrow Seas. Buckingham himself was to command, with Sir Edward Cecil, a Low Country soldier, for his Marshal or chief of the staff. His vice-admiral was the Earl of Essex, his rear-admiral the Earl of Denbigh, neither of whom had ever held a command at sea, and the flag officers of the three squadrons were mostly noblemen of as little experience. The captain of Buckingham's ship, an officer who in those days corresponded in some degree to a modern captain of

the fleet, was Thomas Love. Beyond the fact that he had been on the Council of War and had commanded a King's ship in Mansell's expedition, nothing is known of his previous service; and yet this man was relied on throughout as the chief naval adviser. The only other seamen on the Council of War of the expedition were Argall and Chudleigh, both of whom had commanded merchantmen against Algiers, and possibly Sir John Watts, who appears to have been grandson of the great London privateer owner of Elizabeth's time. Monson, who, in spite of the contempt with which his long experience had been treated, took the keenest interest in the expedition, could not contain his disgust, and laid the failure of the campaign mainly to the 'want of expert men to advise what had been practised in fleets. For every man,' said he, 'that can manage a small bark is not capable to direct a fleet. You should not have relied on sailors put into the habit of gentlemen and made knights before they knew what belonged to gentility, nor were ever expert but in poor petty barks.'[1] With a staff so constituted it is scarcely possible that any naval enterprise could have been successful, in spite of the magnificent chance that offered of destroying the flower of the new Spanish navy at a blow.

But worse was still to come. Before the expedition could sail, it was known that the peace with the Huguenots had been broken. The English ships were to be used to reduce Rochelle, and France had clearly intimated her intention of not risking war with Spain. If there had ever been any idea of acting in concert with the French in the Mediterranean, this put an end to it, and Buckingham was thrown back on the policy of a frontal attack by a great Protestant alliance. In September Dutch plenipotentiaries arrived at Plymouth to negotiate a fresh offensive and defensive treaty, and Buckingham, undeterred by his monstrous diplomatic failures, decided to throw up the command of the fleet and go over to the Hague to form a grand Protestant League. Thus the one man whose personal ascendency

[1] *Tracts*, p. 273.

and breezy confidence might have given the expedition some energy and cohesion was removed, and the command fell to Sir Edward Cecil, a mere infantry colonel of no exceptional ability and little if any experience of an independent command. All that could be done to supply his lack of influence and knowledge was to create him Viscount Wimbledon and surround him with a Council of War, which, besides the noblemen and the few sea captains already mentioned, consisted mainly of colonels like himself.

There is no doubt that, owing to the failure of the Tudor admirals to replace the tactical system they had destroyed with anything really definite and comprehensive, the influence of professional soldiers versed in the fundamental principles of the art of war was what the navy most required. Under the great soldiers of the coming age, Cromwell, William III., and Marlborough, the navy, as we shall see, learnt much; but it was because they and the men of their choice went about their work in the right way, because they could distinguish technical detail from basic essentials, and knew where their own science began and that of the seamen ended. But with Cecil it was not so. Seeing only the chaos which the Elizabethans had left behind them, he tried with the best intentions in the world to force on the seamen a tactical system which was quite regardless of the limitations of their art. To dwell on its precise nature is needless. For our purpose we need only mark it, like so much else in Stuart times, as an effort to do the right thing in the wrong way. An official comment upon it fairly sums it up. 'It was observed,' the Report runs, 'that it intended to enjoin our fleet to advance and fight at sea much after the manner of an army at land, assigning every ship to a particular division, rank, file, and station, which order and regularity was not only improbable but almost impossible to be observed by so great a fleet in so uncertain a place as the sea.' Owing to the fact that no hostile fleet was met with, no attempt was made to put it in practice, and it survives for us only as a vivid glimpse of the condition of tactical opinion when, during the time of transition to the single

line-ahead, it was hovering between squadronal lines and what we should now call a group-formation.[1]

It is from strategical and not from the tactical point of view that Lord Wimbledon's expedition retains its living interest. Here the soldiers were thoroughly at home, and in the domain that was really theirs they struck a note which, though barely audible at first, had the true ring and is still sounding.

Cecil, it would appear, left the Channel with no very definite idea of what his objective was to be. On October 20, having reached the neighbourhood of St. Vincent, he thought well to call a council to settle what they were going to do. So soon as it had assembled he informed his officers that his general instructions were: first, to destroy the King of Spain's shipping; secondly, to possess some place of importance in his country; and, thirdly, as 'the principal point,' to intercept the arrival of the Plate fleet. The question therefore was what place they should seize. He further told them that at a council of war held before the King at Plymouth, San Lucar, the port of Seville, had been the objective most favoured, but the final decision had been left to them on the spot. Then it was that the debate arose in which, so far as is known, was made the first suggestion of an exploit destined eventually to lay the foundation of British power in the Mediterranean. A simple officer in an inglorious expedition, the man who made it has long been forgotten. His very name barely escaped oblivion, and his identity has survived by the merest accident. Yet surely he deserves a shrine in naval annals, and fortunately it is still possible to lift him from his obscurity, and to treasure every shred of his memory that can be recovered.

When we see what he was, it is to be again struck with how little the men of the English navy understood whither their destiny was to lead them. We see that destiny germinating, as it were, by its own vitality out of that obscure mutiny which sent Ward to teach the Barbary pirates the English art, and so forced the Duke

[1] See Appendix, 'Origin of the Line of Battle.'

of Osuna to try with a new sea power to dominate the Mediterranean from Sicily and Naples. It will be remembered that when the great Spanish Viceroy was pressing Venice with his new fleet and Venice was crying to England for help, the focus of her war with the Hapsburgs was at Gradisca, which was closely besieged by a Venetian army. It was Ferdinand's frontier fortress which commanded the coast road round the head of the Adriatic, and so gave access into his ducal dominions about Trieste, where alone he touched the sea. On its fate therefore the war seemed to turn. In command of the sea, the Venetians were free to nourish their besieging army by an easy and rapid line of communication, and so long as this condition existed its fate was recognised to be only a matter of time. Every one saw that all depended on the dominion of the Adriatic. Hence Osuna's eagerness to control it, and Ferdinand's encouragement of the Illyrian pirates and the lavish expenditure of Venice in English and Dutch ports. Every one engaged in the defence of the place was feeling acutely the silent pressure of the sea, and among them was a certain Scottish soldier of fortune in the Austrian service, one Captain Henry Bruce.

Like most others of his type he had begun his career in the Low Country wars, and, after serving the Dutch with distinction, had passed on at the conclusion of the war into the service of the Emperor with the reputation of an accomplished officer with a strongly scientific turn of mind.[1] After the peace of Madrid put an end to the Venetian war he continued to serve his ducal master, and when Ferdinand became Emperor he followed him to Vienna. There his services were rewarded with the governorship of Nikolburg on the Moravian frontier, where, at the outbreak of the Bohemian war, he allowed

[1] He was serving the Dutch as early as 1604, when he got into trouble by killing in a duel a certain Captain Hamilton, Captain-Lieutenant of Buccleuch's regiment. In 1608 he submitted to the States certain military inventions, which were accepted and for which he was well paid. On August 10, 1608, he received a very flattering recommendation from the Dutch Government to the Margrave of Anspach. See Ferguson's *Scots Brigade in Holland* (*Scottish Hist. Soc.*), vol. i

himself to be surprised and was obliged to capitulate. He now left the Emperor's service, as some said, in disgrace; but, according to his own story, he retired with his master's good leave because he could not consent to bear arms against his own king's son-in-law. On his way back to Scotland he reported himself at the Hague to the British Ambassador, Sir Dudley Carleton. Carleton had his suspicions. The man, he wrote home, though of good place and reputation in the Emperor's wars, was a hot papist and perhaps a Jesuit agent. In any case he was a person of consideration, and it was worth while keeping an eye on him. This was in May 1620, when the war fever in England was running high and the drums were beating for the Prince Palatine's recruits under the Spanish Ambassador's window. In hope of a command, probably, Bruce proceeded direct to England. Whether or not he found employment at that time is uncertain, but in 1621 he is described as 'the servitor of the Prince his Highness'; and at any rate by 1625 he had so far established his reputation as to be given the command of the tenth or junior regiment in Buckingham's expeditionary force, which entitled him to a place in the Council of War, and won him a knighthood with the rest.[1]

It was this man who made the memorable proposal. The masters of the fleet had declared in council that San Lucar was impossible. It was a barred harbour, and they refused to be responsible for taking in the King's ships without pilots. The old game of an attack on Cadiz was then put forward, whereupon Sir Henry Bruce got up and boldly proposed Gibraltar. The idea was entirely new and seems to have come upon the greater number of officers present as a surprise. But Bruce proceeded to point out how admirably the place fitted their strength and their objects. The road was a very strong one for the fleet to ride in, the shore afforded a good landing for troops, and, being small, the town could be easily garrisoned and victualled, and so permanently held if once taken. As for its advantages, though Gibraltar was poor compared with Cadiz or San Lucar, yet as a naval station it was un-

[1] *Carleton's Letters*, pp. 456, 460. Ferguson, *op. cit.*

rivalled. The possession of it would place the whole Levant trade at their command and serve as a point of departure for future operations within the Straits. Far better, he urged, to look to the moral effect and future benefits than to be tempted by present pillage.

The reception that Bruce's speech met with is a little doubtful. Afterwards, when Essex and nine of the other colonels formulated an indictment against Cecil for his mismanagement of the campaign, one of their principal charges was that he had not allowed Bruce's suggestion to be properly discussed. They accused him of having slighted both the proposal and its proposer by abruptly putting the question whether it was to be Cadiz or Gibraltar, adding that Gibraltar was Sir Henry Bruce's suggestion and that he seemed to stand alone. This Cecil characterised as a slander, saying that he had known Bruce longer in the wars than any other colonel, and that he was a gentleman he most particularly honoured. Yet the contradictory reasons which he gave for not having treated the proposal more seriously leave us with an impression that it was to his lack of understanding and dread of responsibility that the summary rejection of the idea was due. In one place he pleaded that Gibraltar was too strong and not adapted to the objects of the expedition; in another that he did not know it was Bruce's proposal, but thought it came from the master of his ship; and in a third that he had no authority to go anywhere but to Cadiz or San Lucar. In short his whole defence is that of a man who knew he had made a grave mistake and thrown away the only chance he had had of a triumphant return.[1]

The opportunity that was missed is the more to be regretted since we know the place was in no condition to offer a serious resistance. In response to the changed situation a deep-water harbour had recently been made by the construction of what was so long famous as the 'New Mole'; so that it could now receive broadside ships as well as galleys; but the works were barely finished and

[1] *The Voyage to Cadiz* (*Camden Society*), p. 33. *Two Original Journals of Sir Richard Grenville*, London, 1724, pp. 5, 33.

little or nothing had been done to defend them. The Spaniards themselves were in grave apprehension for the place, and in the previous winter the King in person had visited it and ordered its fortifications to be modernised. The conversion was actually in progress, and it was owing to a similar state of things at Cadiz in 1596 that Essex had taken the town so easily. Gibraltar would certainly have been a still lighter task.[1]

Bruce's proposition being suppressed, the Council decided to attack St. Mary Port, in Cadiz Bay; but this proved as impracticable as San Lucar. It was then decided to land on the Cadiz island and seize Fort Puntal, which guarded the passage into the inner harbour. Here lay a portion of the fleet that had returned from Brazil, and some other vessels, and these they proposed to capture or destroy. But so much time had already been wasted in councils that, long before an attack could be delivered, the Spanish ships had made themselves absolutely secure. The whole design was a poor imitation of what Howard and Essex had attempted in 1596. Every mistake they had then committed was repeated and exaggerated, there was no brilliant genius to repair errors, and in a week the fleet put to sea again, having suffered no little loss and accomplished nothing.

Still, they had gathered intelligence which might have directed them to repairing their fortunes. In Malaga, within the Straits, they learned there was lying the bulk of the Brazil fleet, stricken with disease, wholly unfit for sea and thoroughly demoralised. It was at the mercy of a bold attack, and some of the council of war were in favour of immediately undertaking its destruction. But Cecil could not bring himself to depart from his instructions or even to interpret them broadly. He felt bound to attempt the capture of the Plate fleet. To this end he decided to cruise off Cape St. Vincent, nor could the advocates of action in the Mediterranean wring any better

[1] Lopez de Ayala, *Hist. of Gibraltar* (Trans. James Bell), p. 130. See also the original report on the progress of the work at the end of 1626 by Luis Bravo, *Add. MSS.* 15152; and Aston's report, March 25, 1622, in his 'Letter Book,' *Add. MSS.* 36449.

comfort from him than a rendezvous near Malaga if they were forced from their station by westerly winds; otherwise the rendezvous was to be the Bayona Islands off Galicia. But no westerly gales came to blow them to fortune, and while they cruised fifty leagues to seaward on no definite system and without observation vessels, the Plate fleet slipped into Cadiz behind them unsighted.

Towards the end of November they were driven home in scattered groups, with no semblance of discipline or cohesion left, and Cecil had nothing to show for his pains but a swollen death roll, a shattered fleet no longer fit for sea, and for his reward the nickname of 'General Sit-still.' On the ocean and the Spanish coast they had accomplished nothing, and in the Mediterranean the Marquis of Santa-Cruz had been left free to fly to the rescue of Genoa with a fleet of galleys. The French were forced to retire, and, along the Riviera, place after place was reoccupied by the Spanish admiral. In spite of the great effort that had been made, the Hapsburg position was stronger than ever. England had put forth her dreaded sea power and had failed. The link between Spain and Austria had renewed its strength. Charles's chance of breaking it had passed away, and the Thirty Years' War was left to run its appalling course with no interference from the British navy.

The truth is that England was still under the Elizabethan spell. It was not seen that the centre of power had passed from Spain to the Empire. Spain in English eyes was still the womb of all disturbance. Could she be brought low, all would be well. If war were to be made, it must be waged as Elizabeth had waged it—in the Atlantic and against Spanish trade. It was at this time that the full accounts of Drake's exploits were being published by his family, and it was with Drake's spirit, as Essex and Ralegh had transfigured it, that Buckingham was inspired.[1] No one could see that the heart of the situation

[1] *Sir Francis Drake Reviv'd* was published in 1626, and dedicated by Sir Francis Drake, Bart., to Charles I. *The World Encompassed* he published in 1628, and dedicated it to Robert Earl of Warwick, afterwards Lord High Admiral.

had changed its place since his strategy had passed into legend, and that it was only in the Mediterranean that England would come within striking distance of the new vital points.

In 1626 an effort was made to get a new fleet to sea under Lord Willoughby, another professional soldier, but it was again directed against the Plate fleet, and started so late in the year that it was driven back by gales in the Bay before ever it reached its station. In the following year Buckingham's wild diplomacy had driven us into war with France, and the navy was employed in disastrous efforts to assist the Huguenots at Rochelle. England was drifting further and further from the Mediterranean. Even when Venice, alarmed at the turn things were taking, decided to mediate between France and England and endeavour to stop the insane war, it was understood that, if peace came about, the British fleet was to be used in the Baltic to support the frontal attack from Scandinavia. It was on the eve of Buckingham's assassination, as he was about to lead in person a fresh attempt to relieve Rochelle, that Venice offered her mediation and nothing came of it. In the autumn Rochelle capitulated, and peace with France followed in the spring. But still no fleet went to the Baltic, though Gustavus Adolphus, about to launch on his meteoric career, was crying loudly for its help. In despair the King of Denmark made his peace with the Empire and withdrew from the Protestant alliance. In the following year came peace with Spain, patched up on the lines of that of 1604, which gave to England practically nothing of all she had fought for so long and arduously; and from that time she finally stood aside from the mighty struggle while Gustavus Adolphus did her work by hurling the Hapsburg back from the Baltic. From either of the two seas which gave her a pathway into the heart of Europe she might have deeply influenced the result; but Charles never understood the power he could have put forth. Again, in 1632, when Gustavus was at the zenith of his reputation, and there seemed nothing to stop his sweeping the Hapsburgs from the face of Europe, if only his rear were secured,

he pleaded for the British fleet in the Baltic, and again, in spite of wise counsel from his ministers, Charles stubbornly refused to listen. His whole naval policy was sinking further into reaction, and for the rest of his reign it was devoted, with the aid of the famous ship-money fleets, to enforcing his claim to the sovereignty of the Narrow Seas and to preventing their being disturbed by operations of the belligerents.

CHAPTER XI

MAZARIN AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

It was many a long day before England was again in a position to assert herself in the Mediterranean, and before her hour came the situation that had existed when she first entered the Straits had wholly changed. In the interval, during which the British navy was occupied in the great constitutional struggle between King and Parliament, a new sea power had arisen. France, with whom the epic contest was to be fought out, had definitely taken her place upon the waters of the Mediterranean.

In the last revolt of the Huguenots, Richelieu had seen his vast work of building up the modern French kingdom almost brought to ruin for want of a fleet, and it was in 1626, when he saw the English sea power about to be thrown into the rebels' scale, that he began to lay his foundations. It was in England he found his model. Up to this time the French navy had dragged on a moribund existence under its old mediæval organisation, and was still administered on almost feudal lines by four independent Admiralties. His first move was to sweep them away and centralise the whole organisation as it was centralised in England. He did in fact in one stroke what in England had been done in three main strides of development extending over a whole century. When Henry VIII. in his last years had created his central office of the navy, he had left the service with much of its mediæval colouring by retaining the great office of Lord High Admiral unimpaired. Under Elizabeth, however, it had been largely modernised, not by any definite reform, but in the

characteristic English way of unrecognised change that was found practically convenient. Lord Howard of Effingham remained to all appearance head of the navy, but the bulk of the work was done by Lord Burleigh and his chosen right hand, Sir John Hawkins, so that the Admiralty tended to become more and more an ordinary State department under the direct control of the chief minister of the Crown. By Cranfield's reform the work was practically completed. The last touch was given by Buckingham when he succeeded in getting for himself the office of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports concurrently with that of Lord High Admiral. Thenceforward, like other departments, the navy was administered mainly by civilian public servants, while professional officers contented themselves with handling the material that was provided for them. All this Richelieu accomplished, or seemed to have accomplished, in one act, by abolishing the four Admiralties and substituting in their place a central State department, with himself at its head as Grand Master of Navigation. Immediately beneath him were two Secretaries of State, one for the West and one for the Levant—that is, one for the Ocean and one for the Mediterranean. These officers with two others formed a naval council, whose orders were executed in each of six maritime provinces by a civilian officer styled Lieutenant-General of the Grand Master. The fleet itself was organised in four squadrons—those of Normandy, Brittany, and Guienne for the Ocean, and that of Provence for the Mediterranean.

The system of allocation marks clearly the trend of naval thought at the time. Every eye was turned to the great waters. The momentous revolution that was working itself out upon the ocean and Far Eastern seas absorbed attention. It was there the great struggle for dominion must be settled, and until some one of the oceanic powers had established some kind of preponderance, it was impossible for any of them to make itself felt with a mastering hand upon the Mediterranean. So far indeed did the old arena appear to have lost its importance, that for a time the Provençal or Medi-

terranean squadron remained what it had always been, and was represented practically by the Marseilles galleys and nothing more. It was not till France found herself drawn openly into the Thirty Years' War in a life and death struggle with the Hapsburg alliance, that the importance of the Mediterranean reasserted itself, and it was once more perceived to be what it always had been and always must be. In 1631 Richelieu entered into alliance with Gustavus Adolphus; in the two following years he was considering the project of a great ship canal from Marseilles to the ocean, and the famous naval port of Toulon was begun. His next step was to purchase from the young Duke of Retz, then only fifteen years old, the office of Captain-General of the Galleys, which carried with it the Lieutenancy of the Levant, the one mediæval office that had survived his reforms of 1626. Thus his administrative revolution was completed, and the French navy could begin its career as an homogeneous entity.

But for all he could do, when war with the Hapsburgs was declared in 1635, he was powerless to take the offensive in the Mediterranean, and had to rely on coast defence, while Santa-Cruz threatened the shores of Provence and finally seized the Lerins islands. Situated as they were, they formed a standing menace to the new naval base at Toulon, and the Spaniards were occupying them in force and rapidly throwing up fortifications of great strength, as though the occupation were intended to be permanent. Richelieu at once recognised the error in his naval strategy, and issued orders for practically the whole force of the oceanic squadrons to concentrate at Belle Isle and thence to enter the Mediterranean.

The fleet he was able to collect was a testimony to the success of his reforms. It consisted of some forty ships of war, including the great 'St. Louis' of 1,000 tons, and nine other vessels of 500 tons, the bulk of which belonged to Brittany, where Brest was fast assuming the place in the west that Toulon was to achieve in the south. There were, besides, fourteen

transport and store ships and six fire-ships, which were beginning to be regarded as a necessary factor in every thoroughly equipped fleet, and were yearly growing in tactical importance. The effort practically exhausted the whole capacity of the oceanic squadrons, and, compared with the force England could display, the result was not very imposing. Yet it was a respectable force enough, and about Midsummer 1636 it passed the Straits without finding anything to oppose it, and effected a junction at Hyères with the galleys and a small sailing squadron from Toulon. But there for the time its energy ended. During the rest of the year the mutual jealousy of the various commanders prevented anything being done, and so low was the fleet reduced that it was actually in contemplation for half of it to return to the western ports to refit. At the same moment, however, the Spaniards prematurely reduced their garrison in the Lerins islands. The French seized the occasion, attacked with their whole force, and by the middle of May 1637 the Lerins were once more in French hands. For the remainder of the year they were able to secure a working command of the sea and greatly assist military operations on the Spanish frontier. As winter came on, however, it was found impossible to keep the fleet at sea any longer, and the bulk of it had to be sent back to the western ports for an overhaul. Still, a contingent from each division remained to be dealt with in the Provençal ports, and thus was set on a permanent footing the famous Toulon squadron. In the spring of 1638 it consisted of eighteen ships of war, six of which were of 400 tons and upwards, and three fire-ships—a small beginning, it is true, but, taken with the formidable and increasing force that was being developed in the ocean ports, it was enough to give France a definite status as a first-rate sea power in the Mediterranean.[1]

[1] For the French navy at this time see Jal, *Abraham du Quesne et la Marine de son temps*. Guérin (*Histoire Maritime*) is now regarded in France as untrustworthy. See De la Roncière, *Hist. de la Marine*, vol. i. Introduction.

During the remainder of the war the Toulon squadron, supported from time to time by a division from the Atlantic, continued to have a marked influence on its progress. Its strategical value was mainly displayed in the security enjoyed by the shore of Provence and the coastwise traffic, and by the support it was able to give to the French offensive operations, both in Italy on the one side and Catalonia on the other. So convincing was Richelieu's naval policy that his death brought no interruption of the course upon which he had launched the new monarchy. He was succeeded as Grand Master by his nephew, the young Duc de Brézé, and the growing importance of the Mediterranean in French eyes was emphasised by his taking command of the Toulon fleet in person. Though this was a departure from Richelieu's idea of naval administration, it worked well. The youthful chief showed himself both capable and active, and his first campaign was the most vigorous that had yet been fought. Early in August 1643 he was able to put to sea with twenty-four ships of war, a squadron of galleys, and thirteen fire-ships, and he had ordered seven more ships to join him from the Atlantic. Running down the coast of Catalonia he captured, off Barcelona, five fine Spanish men-of-war, and added them subsequently to his fleet. Continuing his way, he ascertained off Cartagena that there was an armada in Cadiz preparing to oppose him, and he boldly held on to meet it. So serious was the disturbance of the Spaniards' plans, which the French action in the Mediterranean had produced, that they had been compelled to order the Dunkirk squadron, the flower of their navy, to enter the Straits. Off Cape Gata the two fleets met. All day they fought, and so much did the advantage lie with the young French admiral that he not only destroyed three of the finest of the Spanish vessels, but was able to continue his way towards Gibraltar to join hands with his Atlantic division. Still not content, he made a demonstration off Algiers to endeavour to effect an exchange of prisoners, and, after capturing a corsair or two, returned in triumph to Toulon. With pardonable pride he ordered a medal to be struck to commemorate

the campaign, and it bore the legend, *Présage de l'empire de la mer.*

It was scarcely too much to boast, seeing what the command of the Mediterranean meant for France, and it would seem that Mazarin's cool head saw Brézé's campaign in scarcely less glittering colours than did the young commander himself. He began to perceive there were possibilities in the new weapon beyond anything it had yet achieved. So long as his alliance with the Dutch remained firm he could trust to them the care of the ocean and the support of his army operating in the Spanish Netherlands, while, with the exception of a sufficient force for coast defence, he could concentrate practically the whole of the French naval strength in the Mediterranean. Mazarin is usually blamed for having neglected the navy, and having failed to maintain the vigorous growth Richelieu had inaugurated. But seeing the vast drain which the military exigencies of the situation were making upon the resources of the country, and the practical security which the Dutch alliance gave him in the Atlantic, the censure is probably unjust. Regarding his war policy from a purely strategical point of view, it would be a fairer judgment to praise him unreservedly for the bold and clear view which recognised the limited naval capacity of his country, and decided to concentrate the whole of it at the most vital point. That point he recognised in the western half of the Mediterranean. With the Spaniards in command of it, it was a path for invasion into Southern France. In French hands it was a gulf driven through the centre of the Hapsburg system and exposing it to incalculable attacks in every direction. On this principle Mazarin appears to have acted. Whether or not he fully appreciated what he was doing is a personal question that does not concern us. We have but to observe the fact and mark the result.

During the two years that followed the campaign of 1643 the Duc de Brézé with his able lieutenant, the Chevalier Paul, was occupied in supporting the invasion of Catalonia; but already Mazarin was contemplating for him a more telling stroke. For some time past his

far-seeing eye had been fixed upon the old centres of Mediterranean power, and both in Naples and Sicily he had been busily fomenting the discontent which the maladministration of the Spaniards engendered. All that the possession of the Two Sicilies meant for his enemy was clear to him, and he was bent on wresting them from her grasp. 'It is no less a matter,' he wrote, in telling his agent to spare no expense, 'than the loss of two kingdoms, which would be the death-blow to Spain.' His accurate measurement of the power at his disposal did not permit him to think of a direct conquest. The end was to be gained in another way by the hand of Prince Thomas of Savoy. As a first step a military expedition under his command, supported by Brézé's fleet, was directed against the ports which the Spaniards held in the south of Tuscany, in order to secure for France a fresh opening into the Spanish Italian possessions, and at the same time to warn the Pope of the danger of leaning too markedly to Spain. This done, if affairs in Naples were ripe for the reception of a liberator, the Prince was to be established there as king of an independent state, on condition that he would cede to France the port of Gaeta on the southern frontier of the Papal territory, and another in the Adriatic. It was further stipulated that, should he or his heirs ever succeed to the throne of Savoy, he was to cede to France so much of his territory as lay to the west of the Alps—that is to say, the province of Nice. Thus Mazarin, anticipating history by two centuries, sought to complete the Mediterranean coast-line of France, while at the same time he held the Pope gripped between two naval ports, secured a new point from which to strike at the Hapsburg's communications, established himself in the heart of the Mediterranean, and saw the key of it in the hands of a prince who must be dependent upon his master.[1]

It was a conception worthy of a great minister, and the Duc de Brézé was a commander well suited to his hand. In May 1646 he sailed from Toulon at the head of a fleet of twenty-six ships, twenty galleys, and

[1] *Lettres du Cardinal Mazarin* (*Documents Inédits*), ii. 304.

eighteen fire-ships, together with a number of transports carrying six thousand troops under Prince Thomas of Savoy. Without difficulty they were suddenly thrown ashore in Tuscany, and, having established himself there, the Prince, with the assistance of Brézé's fleet, laid siege to Orbitello, the most important of the Spanish ports. To take the place by assault was impossible, and before the siege was four days old the Spanish fleet, which had rendezvoused at Naples, appeared to relieve it. The two fleets were fairly equal, except that the Spaniards were considerably stronger in galleys. In the action that ensued both sides claimed the victory, but in effect it was the Spaniards who reaped all the advantage. The Duc de Brézé, still only in his thirtieth year, was killed by a round shot, and his vice-admiral decided to take the fleet back into port to repair damages. It is true the Spaniards did the same, but their object was accomplished. The Prince of Savoy found it impossible to continue the siege, and, so far from being able to proceed, crowned with victory, to Naples, it was only with the greatest difficulty he effected his retreat to Turin.

Mazarin's first offensive stroke was parried, but his purpose held firm. The failure of the campaign had but served to emphasise the importance of the navy, and all the most exalted and ambitious spirits in France were eager to secure its command. The great Condé himself, who, since his late victory at Rocroy, was adored as the national hero, was the most pressing claimant to the vacant office of Grand Master, and Mazarin saw the very keenness of the new weapon threatening his policy with failure. Other great nobles were as covetous of the place as Condé, but Mazarin at all costs was resolved to hold true to his master's idea. The navy was far too powerful a factor in the new kingdom to be allowed to pass out of the control of the central Government. Henceforth it must lie in his own hands, as it had been in Richelieu's, and with one of his masterly strokes he baffled all the claimants by getting the Queen Regent herself to accept the exalted post. So Anne of Austria became Grand Master of Navigation, and whatever was the Queen

Regent's was Mazarin's. Unshaken by the late failure, the first use he made of his new power was to order a division of the Toulon fleet to sea with fresh troops, and before the autumn was out he was in possession of Piombino, another Tuscan port which the Spaniards occupied to the north of Orbitello, and firmly established in Porto Longone in the adjacent Isle of Elba. Thus his position was completely recovered. In Piombino he had a gateway into Tuscany; and in Elba, immediately opposite to it, an advanced naval base, which gave him a still greater advantage than that which the Spaniards enjoyed in Corsica and Sardinia. Nor did he sleep on his advantage or for one moment turn his eye from the great project he had conceived. In the following year the bulk of the Toulon fleet was occupied in supporting Condé, who had been induced to accept the command in Catalonia; but a division of it was sent, under the Chevalier Paul, to Piombino and Elba to keep an eye on Naples. There at last Mazarin's machinations were bearing visible fruit. A revolution had broken out, and the famous Masaniello, at the head of a popular outbreak, had proclaimed a republic. The news caused a profound sensation in Europe. The principal cities of Sicily had responded to the revolutionary movement, and men saw a possibility of the Two Sicilies becoming for Spain another Holland. All that seemed to be required was a leader of dignity and experience, and the same kind of support from outside with which England under Elizabeth had enabled the Dutch to gain their feet.

Still Mazarin held his hand. Prince Thomas received no call and the fleet remained at Elba. The fact was Mazarin had learned the great lesson. The late campaign had taught him that nothing really effective could be achieved without first gaining a real command of the sea. He was therefore resolved not to risk another step until he had concentrated every available ship in the Mediterranean. His success on the Tuscan coast had decided the Grand Duke to secretly throw in his lot with France, and he had sold all his galleys to Louis in the name of the Prince of Monaco. The new King of Portugal too

had been engaged to send a squadron of his best ships to Toulon, and Du Quesne was on his way to enter the Straits with a squadron he had raised in Sweden. Mazarin knew besides that a premature intervention might nip the Neapolitan revolution in the bud, and to his agents' urgent calls from Italy he replied that they must not try to eat the fruit until it was ripe. With these considerations he also sought to quiet Prince Thomas's impatience; for the truth was he meant to throw him over. His great scheme had taken a further development. Condé was the greatest leader in Europe; Condé was the great stumblingblock to Mazarin's internal policy; and the astute minister saw that, if Condé could only be induced to accept the enterprise of the Two Sicilies, he would achieve a double stroke of incalculable advantage to his country. Not only would the chief disturbing factor be removed from France, but, with a prince of the blood at the head of a new Mediterranean state, the Two Sicilies would become for France all that the Catholic Netherlands had been for Spain.

So full of brilliant promise was Mazarin's idea that it is difficult not to pause a moment and wonder how the course of European policy might have been changed could Condé have been induced to spend his ambition and unrivalled genius in building up at Naples or Palermo a naval state in sympathy with France. But it was not to be. Condé apparently could only see in the proposal a crafty design to ruin him, and he refused. So Mazarin was forced back on Prince Thomas and his policy of waiting till the fruit was ripe. Still hoping Condé might change his mind, he resolved to let things stay as they were till he could no longer hold back. But, just when all was settled, his hand was forced by a wholly unlooked-for incident.

In Rome was the young Duke of Guise, trying to get a divorce, and longing to drown his private cares in any wild sea of public adventure. No more romantic or fascinating figure gilds the annals of his time. In person, character, and temper, Heaven seemed to have designed him for a popular hero. The blood of the old Angevins who had

once ruled in the Sicilies tingled in his veins and fired him to seek in the stormy outburst at Naples a way to his highest aspirations. More astute even than Mazarin, he industriously fomented republican opinions in Naples till one day he received from the popular leaders an invitation to come and be to them what the princes of the House of Orange had been to the Dutch. He asked Louis's consent to accept, and Mazarin hardly knew what to answer. There was still time to consider, however, and Mazarin felt he might safely risk a vague consent. He was sure at any rate that for the present Guise could not act upon it; for the Spanish fleet held the sea, and the land route to Naples was impossible. But suddenly came the news that the daring young prince had gone aboard a felucca almost alone, and, passing through the centre of the blockading Spanish force, had landed at Naples. A feather-headed young gallant, no matter how brilliant his personality, was the last instrument Mazarin would have chosen to work his Mediterranean policy. But he had to act. The Toulon squadron had retired into port for the winter. Nevertheless, so much of it as could get to sea was immediately ordered out, and after serious delay from the wintry weather it appeared off Naples. But there was now no Duc de Brézé to give it life. The Duc de Richelieu was in command, and though he had under him such officers as the Chevalier Paul and Abraham Du Quesne, he practically did nothing. After blockading the enemy's fleet under the guns of the batteries that were still in Spanish hands for two months, and fighting a half-hearted action, he returned in disorder to Toulon.

The enterprise of Naples had failed a second time, but Guise was still there, and Mazarin was too firmly set on his great idea not to persist. He kept repeating to all concerned that the loss of Naples meant the death-blow to Spain, and stirred every nerve to prepare a still stronger expedition for the spring of 1648. But long before it could sail came the news that Guise's reckless behaviour had succeeded in disgusting the Neapolitans. The Spaniards had been treacherously readmitted and the Duke was a prisoner. The event was not entirely un-

welcome. Neither Louis nor Mazarin had ever approved Guise's adventures, and now falling back on the original idea they offered the command of the new expedition they were preparing to Prince Thomas. He accepted, but it was not till August that he was able to get to sea. The force at his command was the most powerful France had yet developed upon the Mediterranean. It consisted of some seventy sail of warships and transports, and Mazarin had reason to hope that its appearance in the Bay of Naples would be the signal for a new revolution, or at least that it would be able to seize one of the Neapolitan islands and establish there a base for further operations. In both expectations he was disappointed. So strongly had the Spaniards re-established themselves, and so ill were the operations conducted, that it was found impossible to accomplish anything.

Mazarin's far-sighted design had finally failed, but it had left its mark. So near had it been to success, so dangerously had the balance of Mediterranean power been swaying for a change, that a new condition had been definitely introduced into European politics. The sailing of that formidable fleet from Toulon marks the definite appearance of France as a Mediterranean power, and the abortive attempt on the Two Sicilies was to be remembered less as a failure than as an indication of the possibilities that lay open to the new sea power. Though for a time the outbreak of Condé paralysed the action of France with civil war, every one felt the attempt was likely to be renewed so soon as she was herself again, and nowhere was the new situation more keenly watched than in England.

CHAPTER XII

THE NEW NAVY

At the moment when the preoccupation of civil strife brought to a halt the development of the French navy, that of England was set free, and she found herself at liberty to reappear in the Mediterranean just when France was forced to abandon her attempt to dominate it. It was a memorable hour, big with transition. There are few points in European history where a period is so strongly marked as at this halting place—midway in the seventeenth century. As we listen to the great pæan there comes a pause in its throb, and when the sound flows on again it is in a rhythm entirely changed. In the history of the British navy it is no less marked than in that of European polity. When England awoke to take her place once more among the powers, it was to face a new situation with a new weapon and a new method of wielding it.

The situation must be clearly apprehended. The main reason which had made Mazarin so eager to deal Spain a death-blow in the Mediterranean was that, in January 1648, she had induced his Dutch allies to make a separate peace with her, and thus the struggle between Spaniards and Dutch which had lasted eighty years was brought definitely to an end. Mazarin's idea had been to force Spain into a peace with France by creating in the Mediterranean a situation which she dared not face. In this, as we have seen, he failed; but before the year was out he had come to terms with the Empire and thus broken up the Hapsburg alliance. At the same time the Empire too made peace with Sweden, and the Thirty Years' War was at an end. Spain and France were left facing each

other single-handed, each crippled by inherent troubles, but fairly matched and neutralising one another on the European board. The other prime factors in the situation were that the United Provinces were starting finally on their brief career as one of the great powers; Portugal was again an independent kingdom; and, lastly, there had arisen on the ruins of the decrepit Stuart monarchy a military state whose power of disturbance it was impossible to calculate.

It was a phenomenon unknown to modern Europe, and no one could tell how to deal with it. Diplomacy was in those days almost entirely a matter of dynastic connections, and here was a state without a dynasty. The extraordinary military ability it had developed made it a desirable ally, but in every Court of Europe it was regarded with repulsion, which the execution of the King increased to loathing. It was natural then that the only method of handling the situation that suggested itself to the old monarchies was to keep well with the exiled dynasty till an opportunity arose for restoring it and so securing its alliance. Till that time came the new Republic could be ignored as a pariah among nations. For, powerful as was its military strength, its navy as yet had made no appearance, and there was no indication that it could stretch its arm beyond the sea.

The position indeed in which the Commonwealth found itself at the outset of its career upon the sea was almost ignominious, and gave no sign of the impressive future that lay before it. It was not that the navy had been neglected. From the King the Parliamentary Government had inherited a force that was not below the traditional standard. No one can deny to Charles his devotion to the navy. It was the immediate cause of his ruin and the outcome of it one of the mainstays of his opponents. So soon as Richelieu's energy began to threaten a serious rivalry upon the seas, a new era of naval activity had set in and the English dockyards were busy, as they were to be so often again, in a building match with the French. In 1631 Charles had procured a detailed return of Richelieu's navy, showing some forty vessels ranging from

200 to 900 tons, more than half of them being 34 to 40-gun ships of 400 to 500 tons. Such a navy, at least on paper, was a serious rival, and in the next three years the English dockyards turned out four vessels of about 800 tons and two of 500, so that in the ensuing year the 'ship money' fleets could ride the Narrow Seas in undisputed mastery.

But the contest did not end here. The French had laid down a vessel of 1400 tons, and Charles called for designs for a three-decker of 1500. Such a ship had never been heard of. It was some years under consideration, but in spite of the protests of the experts that a warship with three gun decks was 'beyond the art or wit of man to construct,' the King persisted. In January 1636 the keel was laid, and in October 1638 was launched the famous 'Sovereign of the Seas' of 102 guns, the pride and glory of the Caroline navy, and the first three-decker ever built. Yet the French were not altogether beaten. In the same year they were able to commission the 'Couronne' of 2000 tons; but, though she was 28 ft. longer than the 'Sovereign,' she was not a three-decker and only carried 72 guns. Still Charles was not satisfied. He began at once to contemplate another 'Sovereign,' but before her keel could be laid his troubles were upon him and she was still-born.

It is not only in this early contest with France that the interest of the Caroline programme lies. It was an age of invention and experiment: the new scientific spirit was astir, and naval architecture, like everything else, felt its quickening. Engines for moving ships against wind and tide were constantly being designed, paddle vessels were regularly employed for towing the navy ships in and out of the Medway, and even submarines were not beyond the daring of inventors.[1] Such aspirations were of course premature; but a distinct advance in naval architecture did take place, and its most prominent result was the appearance of the modern 'frigate.' In 1627, during the height of his war with France and Spain, Charles had sought to supply his lack of cruisers by building ten 'whelps' of

[1] An interesting account of these inventions is among Lord Dartmouth's MSS.

about 200 tons. They were still on Elizabethan lines, designed like the larger pinnaces to use oars, but were otherwise small replicas of 'great ships.' In 1640 Richelieu replied with ten 'dragones,' apparently on the same lines. So far there seems little sign of change in the typical cruiser, from either England or France. The truth is that neither country can claim the credit of the 'frigate.' It was in the piratical port of Dunkirk, where constructors were freed from Government control, that the real step was taken. We have seen how the place had been earning itself the reputation of the smartest dockyard in Europe, and turning out privateers which no one could touch. In the year 1635, when the Conde de Fuentes took over the command of the Spanish squadron of Dunkirk, he found in it a division of twelve 'fregatas' which Spaniards regarded as a wholly new type and claim as the model that all nations followed. The ocean powers had all of course long ago left behind the original Mediterranean form of 'frigate,' which was only a small and modified galley, and were applying the word to small fast-sailing vessels such as the *gallizabras*, which carried the Spanish treasure trade. But the Dunkirk ships were a still further advance. For the most part they were vessels of from 200 to 300 tons, with 20 to 30 guns, and their marked characteristic was that they had no poop or forecastle of any kind, but an upper deck that ran flush from stem to stern, a modification which was found to give them extraordinary speed and handiness.[1]

During the year 1635 the Dunkirkers, with their hand against every man's, made a remarkable number of prizes; but in 1636 two of them, the 'Swan' and the 'Nicodemus,' were captured by the 'ship money' fleet under Northumberland, and were added to the navy as the fastest vessels afloat. Sir John Penington, his vice-admiral and one of the most experienced officers in the service, was so much struck with them that he advised the 'Swan' being taken as a model in the English dockyards, and the 'Nicodemus' was said to run away from everything 'as a greyhound does from a little dog.' The

[1] Duro, *Armada Española*, iv. 407.

dimensions of the 'Swan' are unknown, for before Penington's advice could be acted on she was wrecked off Guernsey; but the 'Nicodemus' we know to have been of 105 tons with a length of nearly $3\frac{1}{3}$ times her beam. This was a distinct advance on the old galleon proportion, on which Charles's construction had been going in all his latest ships, and it may be that this increased length was a further characteristic of the new Dunkirk frigates, and that this is the real explanation of the same characteristic appearing in the first frigates of the Long Parliament.

The point is difficult to determine, for, owing to the troubles that supervened, the English dockyards, so far as new work was concerned, were silent for nearly ten years. Though the navy had not particularly distinguished itself during the first civil war, it had remained staunch to its paymasters and had sufficed to give the Parliament the command of the sea against the King. It was not till the last great effort was being made to bring the protracted strife to a conclusion that any serious measures were taken to increase the naval energy of the Parliament.

It is in the year 1645 that we may place the conception of the true modern navy—the year that by a strange chance was the centenary of the fleet which marked the culmination of the naval reforms of Henry VIII., and which finally established the English domination of the Narrow Seas. The movement out of which the change came was the same that produced the New Model army, so that in that year we see our modern army and our modern navy lying as it were side by side in one cradle. By virtue of the Self-Denying Ordinance both services passed together out of the hands of the politicians to be refashioned by professional men. The Earl of Warwick resigned his office of Lord High Admiral, and its duties were vested in a commission of six peers and twelve commoners. The influence of the experts was at once visible in a programme embodying the ideas which had been in the air for the past ten years. During 1646 and 1647, the first years of the new administration, at least nine vessels of the new long frigate type were launched. They varied from a little over 200 tons up to nearly 500,

and carried from 26 to 38 guns. Most famous of them all was the 'Constant Warwick,' built in 1646 as a privateer by a syndicate in which Warwick was the chief partner. From her birth she was regularly chartered by the Parliament, and finally purchased into the navy in 1649.

Pepys believed her to have been the first true frigate ever laid down in an English dockyard, and to have been copied from a French vessel that had been lying in the Thames. This may have been the fact, but she can hardly claim to be the first of her class, since in the same year she was built the Government launched four others of their own which were on lines even more advanced than the 'Warwick.' Even therefore if she was actually copied from a French ship, the others were not, and the oft-repeated assertion that we owed the type to France cannot be supported. The fact probably is that both nations learnt in the same school—the school of Dunkirk, which at that time, if it was anything, was Spanish, although it did actually surrender to the French in this very year, 1646.

So far then all was going well with the navy of the Parliament. The men, better paid and treated than they had ever been before, and commanded by seamen after their own heart, responded with ungrudging obedience, and it was not till the triumph of the constitutional party split it into two factions that the trouble began. So little interest had the sailors displayed in the merits of the struggle, that a revolt was hardly to be looked for, and indeed it may be doubted whether any would have occurred, had it not been for the lines on which the split declared itself. The question of the future settlement of the Government rapidly resolved itself into a quarrel between the older constitutionalists and the new military party. The jealousy which to some extent is inevitable between the two services naturally inclined the sailors to be restless under the threatened domination of military officers, especially as it seemed to them to involve a return to the detested landsmen officers of Charles's time. The anxiety of the military party to secure the fleet brought about the crisis. In October 1647 Captain William

Batten, a popular seaman who had been appointed Vice-Admiral of England and Commander-in-Chief when Warwick had been obliged to resign, was summoned somewhat peremptorily to explain certain matters to the Government, and, being uneasy at the turn things were taking, seized the opportunity to tender his resignation. It was accepted with alacrity, and an active member of the Navy Board, Colonel Thomas Rainsborough, appointed Commander-in-Chief in his place. He was a typical man of the New Model, a strong Independent, and apparently filled with an overweening sense of what was due to the men of the army that had delivered the country. To the sailors he was detestable, for, although he had formerly commanded afloat, he was essentially the soldier. For six months they endured what they called his 'insufferable pride, ignorance, and insolency,' and then they mutinied and refused to allow him aboard his ship. The other vessels of the fleet followed the example of the flagship and similarly got rid of their objectionable officers.

May 1648, when the mutiny occurred, was one of the darkest hours for the revolution. The second civil war was breaking out. The Scots were preparing to cross the border to the King's rescue, and Royalist risings had taken place in Wales, the Eastern Counties, and Kent. The Presbyterians in London could barely be controlled; there was every sign of the insurrection spreading to Surrey and Essex; the Kentish Royalists were threatening the capital from Rochester and Deptford; and under the guns of the revolted ships the castles of Deal, Sandown, and Walmer were forced to surrender, and Dover was besieged. There was not a moment to lose. The seamen demanded that Warwick should come back to command them, and the Government had no choice but to reappoint him Lord High Admiral and send him off at once. He was so far successful that of the twenty-seven vessels that composed the fleet in the Downs he was able to secure eighteen; but the other nine, including the 'Constant Reformation' and one of the new frigates, declared openly for the King and stood over to Goree in Holland.

Thither the Prince of Wales hastened to meet them,

and so large was the demand which the new civil war made upon the Parliamentary fleet that he found himself actually in superior force to anything that could be brought to meet him. The way was open for a sudden descent on the capital or the revolted counties, and in July he stood over to the English coast. There, to make matters worse, Batten, who managed to escape from custody in London, joined him in the 'Constant Warwick.' The Prince had now eleven vessels and the most popular and experienced officers in the service at his command, and Warwick had not yet succeeded in weeding his fleet of sedition. For a month the Prince was able to blockade the Thames, intercepting a number of valuable homeward-bound vessels, and to keep himself interposed between the Chatham and Portsmouth divisions of the Parliamentary fleet. It was a most promising situation in view of the unrest of the Presbyterian City and the Scottish invasion. Unfortunately the Prince had insisted on commanding the fleet himself, and neither he nor his Presbyterian vice-admiral, Lord Willoughby of Parham, knew anything of their business; and as for Batten, who had been knighted and made rear-admiral, he was too uneasy in his conscience to be capable of vigorous action. Thus nothing was made of the opportunity. Every attempt to assist the movement in the home counties failed ignominiously. For fear of offending the City, the prizes were given up for next to nothing, and neither division of the Parliamentary fleet was brought to action. Then came Cromwell's crushing defeat of the Scots at Preston to shatter all the hopes on which the Prince's action was based; and though the seamen forced him to make one desperate attempt to bring Warwick to action in the Thames, it failed, and the revolted ships had to return to Helvoetsluys, where Warwick blockaded them till the advancing season compelled him to withdraw.

Thus the naval position of the Commonwealth at the outset of its career was by no means imposing. It had displayed an inability to use the force at its command with vigour and promptitude, and the Prince of Wales had

the nucleus of a fleet, officered by some of the best men in the service, to increase the demands that the maritime force of the Parliament had proved inadequate to meet. Save for the evil star of the Stuarts the situation might have been still worse, but, as usual, they played into their enemies' hands. Already mutinous for want of pay, and mistrustful of their Presbyterian officers, the sailors were disgusted with the intrigues of the Prince's followers for the command. They themselves, uneasy at having been carried back to a foreign port, and clinging fanatically to the idea that they had not deserted their country, clamoured for the Duke of York, their legitimate Lord High Admiral, and at such a moment to place over them a foreigner was the most ill-advised step that could be taken. Yet this was what was done. Prince Rupert and his brother Maurice, who, though they had been at sea with the Prince of Wales, had made no progress in the seamen's affection, were nominated admiral and vice-admiral. The result was that Batten, Jordan (afterwards the famous admiral of the Dutch war), and two or three other captains withdrew from the service, the sailors deserted wholesale, and, the 'Constant Warwick' having already set the example, several of the other ships returned to England and surrendered.

Still the position was awkward enough. The Royalists retained the nucleus of a fleet, around which privateers of all nations would be willing enough to gather in order to prey on English commerce. The Queen of Bohemia pawned her jewels to assist her adventurous sons, and they justified their appointment by such a display of energy that in January 1649, a fortnight before the King's execution, they were able to put to sea with eight vessels, and under the wing of three Dutch East Indiamen to pass down the Channel defying the winter guard to stop them.

Hitherto the civil war had been confined to the land; but now, with Scotland and Ireland on their hands, and every foreign nation in a condition of barely concealed hostility, the revolutionary Government saw it spreading to the sea. But for the new men danger was only a spur

to effort. Energy, thoroughness, and a practical and scientific directness of method were their note, and the King was barely in his grave before they set on foot those far-reaching measures, that finally transformed the navy to its modern shape, and established England as the great naval power of the world.

The promptitude with which they acted reveals the importance they attached to their maritime position, and the boldness and sagacity with which they grasped the task that lay before them. It was on January 30, 1649, that the King's head fell. On February 2 they voted that no fewer than thirty armed merchantmen should be added to the fleet; ten days later they placed the office of naval Commander-in-Chief in the hands of a commission consisting of three of their most trusted colonels; ten days later, again, Warwick's appointment as Lord High Admiral was terminated, and the powers and duties of the office vested in the Council of State; and even before they had formally abolished the kingly office they had passed two ordinances for the encouragement of seamen and increasing the attractions of the naval service. The main feature of these measures was a large increase and clear definition of the share of prize money which they intended to allow, and in view of the policy they were contemplating and the recent exhibition of the seamen's opinion some substantial gratification was imperative. For the navy was about to be brought definitely under the military domination, which had been threatening and exasperating it ever since the fall of Howard, and herein lies the absorbing interest of the new administration.

In a sense the reform was a reaction—a reaction to the system which Drake and his school had broken down —a reaction to the ideas of the Mediterranean which regarded the naval and military arts as one. In the south the two arts were but two branches of the great art of war, governed by the same essential principles and to be worked out on the same essential lines. It was this influence which, stiffened into pedantry, had choked the development of naval science till the Elizabethans

delivered it. But great advance as was the reform of Wynter, Hawkins, and Drake, it must not be forgotten that it was mainly destructive. They broke down the old tradition, but created little to take its place. True, there are signs that Drake saw dimly the disease which his work was likely to engender, and in the year after the Armada he experimented for a remedy; but time and opportunity were wanting for fruition. In Buckingham's time, as we have seen, an attempt was made to restore the good that had perished with the evil, but it was attempted on vicious lines and the remedy proved worse than the disease. Then the Long Parliament went back frankly to the ideas of the Elizabethan seamen, and they too missed success—even came close to disaster. It is but natural then that the new military government should see in that lack of success a lesson that was perfectly clear to their eyes. It was the military element that was wanting—not as Buckingham understood it—not the chivalry and the feathers, but the element of the professional soldier with his matter-of-fact appreciation of the fundamental principles of his art. It was this element to which the Parliament had surrendered itself in its most hopeless hour, and it had given them the New Model army. Now that the New Model was in power it was inevitable that it should see salvation for the navy in the same element by which it had triumphed.

Nowhere exists any definite enunciation of these views. The work shows itself to us as an assertion of that instinct for administration which is the remarkable feature of the Commonwealth, and we have to gather it from what was done and not from what was said. In what was done the trend of thought is unmistakable. We see it clearly in the choice of their three 'Generals at Sea,' as they came to be called. Colonel Edward Popham, it is true, had served afloat, but it was many years back, when he was quite a young man, and he was now forty. In the ship-money fleet of 1636 he had been lieutenant in the 'Henrietta Maria,' and the following year commanded the 'Fifth Whelp' and lost her. It was no fault of his, and he again had a ship in 1639.

But the fact that a man commanded afloat in those days of landsmen captains is no proof that he was a sailor, and certainly at the outbreak of the civil war Popham served ashore, raising men for the Parliament and receiving the rank of colonel almost from the outset. In any case the sailors' view of him admits of no dispute; for he was one of the three colonels whose presence as captains in the fleet had led to the recent mutiny, and his ship, the 'Swallow,' like Rainsborough's own, had remained with the Prince of Wales and was now with Rupert. Again, in the case of Colonel Richard Deane, although, being the nephew of a city merchant, he is said to have made trading voyages as a young man, throughout the civil wars he had served as a soldier, and had acquired the highest reputation as an artillery officer. At Preston too he had shown real tactical ability when in command of the right wing of Cromwell's victorious army.

The third case is the most remarkable of all, and it brings us to the name which was to the navy of the seventeenth century what Drake's had been to that of the sixteenth, and with which the reappearance of England in the Mediterranean is indissolubly associated. It is Robert Blake that tradition has always acclaimed as the master spirit of the Cromwellian navy, and modern research has only confirmed his place. Many achievements with which he was credited have, it is true, been found to be exaggerated, and some even without foundation. But this only serves to reveal how profound was the impression of his work. Legends grew up about his name as they grew up about Drake's; but, shatter them as we will, they still serve the more strongly to reveal to us how great was the place each held for the men of his age. Though Blake was no professional soldier like Skippon and Leslie and Monk, there was nothing in his career to make him a seaman, except possibly, as in Deane's case, a few trading voyages in his youth. Till the age of twenty-six he had been a scholar at Oxford, and then, having failed to obtain a fellowship, he returned to Bridgewater, his native town, where his family were merchants. For five or six years 'in his

youth' he lived at Schiedam in Holland, and while there seems to have become acquainted with Tromp. It may well have been that he went there as agent for the family business.[1] At the outbreak of the war he appears to have attached himself to Popham, and when Bristol surrendered to Rupert in 1643 he was already lieutenant-colonel of Popham's regiment. Here it was he first became prominent by refusing for twenty-four hours to give up the outwork he commanded, vowing it was not included in the capitulation, and that he could still hold it. The following year he was the moving spirit of the defence of Lyme in Dorsetshire, when for a month, with a garrison of five hundred men, it held out against all Prince Maurice's army till the place was relieved, and so frustrated the Royalist strategy in the west. Then he held Taunton, a barely defensible place, for a whole year, and again paralysed the Royalist action in Devon and Cornwall. In the second civil war his name appears in no prominent position, and he was mentioned in cavalier circles as a man who had not received his due reward, and therefore was worth watching. The reason of his sudden elevation to the head of the navy is still a mystery, unless during the recent time of acute anxiety he had done something, of which nothing is known, to prevent a Royalist outbreak in the west. The credit of his selection is probably due to the man who first recognised his talents. Popham, by reason of his previous experience, was, of all the men whom the new Government could trust, the one most confidently looked to in naval affairs, and his request to have his old lieutenant-colonel for a colleague would probably have been enough to secure Blake's appointment.

Still, no one was more surprised at his sudden elevation than Blake himself, and one man at least thought his talents were thrown away at sea. Barely six months after he had entered on his new duties, and while he was actually blockading Rupert on the Munster coast, Cromwell, who had just landed in Ireland and was face to face with the enormous difficulties of his task, applied

[1] Gardiner, *Dutch War*, pp. 217, 402.

for him to be his major-general.[1] No higher compliment could have been paid to his soldiership. It was an office which, as corresponding to a modern chief of the staff, was usually reserved for professional soldiers of the ripest experience. But Blake was already wedded to his new career, and in his bulldog way had no mind to loosen his teeth on the prey he was watching. So soon as he heard of it he wrote off to Popham begging him to get the application withdrawn. 'It was a strange surprise,' he said, 'greater even than that of my present employment, which, although it was extremely beyond my expectations as well as merits, I was soon able to resolve upon by your counsel and friendship.' He even intimated that, anxious as he was to serve the Parliament, he would retire into private life rather than submit to be taken from the sea. 'I desire,' he concluded, 'to serve the Parliament in anything I can, so I shall account it an especial happiness to be able to serve them in that conjunction [in] which they have already placed me. If they please otherwise to resolve I shall be content with a great deal more cheerfulness to lay down the command than I took it up, and in private to contribute the devoutest performances of my soul for their honour and prosperity.'[2] After this letter no more was heard of Cromwell's application. The place was given to Ireton, and the three colonels remained to bend the navy in shape with their own ideas.

It must not of course be concluded that the installation of these men was not mainly for a political end. The desire to secure the navy undoubtedly came before the intention of reforming it. But the one was so inevitably the outcome of the other that the Government of the Commonwealth must be taken to have intended what the new appointments achieved. Their primary intention was to see the navy in hands they could trust;

[1] Cromwell landed August 15. The application was known to Deane in Dublin on August 23. See Deane to Popham, *Leybourne-Popham MSS.* (*Hist. MSS. Com.*) p. 34.

[2] Col. Robert Blake to Col. Edward Popham, September 16, 1649. *Leybourne-Popham MSS.* (*Hist. MSS. Com.*) p. 38.

but it is no less certain that they intended that these same hands should infuse into the sea service the same spirit and the same science which had secured them the devotion and the triumphs of the army. Time and reflection only deepened the lines they had begun to trace. In March the following year the Council of State delegated their Admiralty work to a committee of seven of their number. Continuity was secured in the presidency of Sir Henry Vane, who had been the Parliamentary Treasurer of the Navy; but of the other six members four, including Popham, were colonels, and thus the soldiers were in a majority. At the same time, while the seamen were conciliated by an increase of pay, more military officers were given ships for the summer fleet.

In the following month we get a further insight into the feeling that prevailed, in the announcement that 'on April 9 the Lord General (Fairfax), Lord President (Bradshaw), and Mr. Speaker, with many members of Parliament and officers of the army, went to Deptford to see the launching of the two frigates.' These were the latest vessels of the new type, the one of 60 guns named the 'Fairfax,' and the other of 42 called the 'President.' A third frigate of 64 guns was launched the same year and named the 'Speaker.' Besides these vessels two other large ones, the 'Constant Warwick' and the 'Guinea,' had been bought into the fleet. Substantial as this increase of force was, it was but the firstfruits of the new policy. During this and the following year no fewer than twenty-one new vessels were built or bought, besides thirteen prizes that were added to the Navy List. Such wholesale addition to the permanent force of the nation was without precedent and marks the beginning of a momentous change which is attributed mainly to Blake, but of which Popham was perhaps the true father.

It was an age of standing armies, and the new continental idea of military organisation which Charles had tried to graft upon the navy was now established by the men who had opposed him. In his ship-money fleets Charles had endeavoured to create a real standing navy. Up to this time, as we know, the naval defence of the kingdom had largely

rested on what was really a naval militia centred on a small permanent nucleus. The navy of England was the whole of its shipping, the royal navy only that part of it which belonged to the King. In the Armada campaign the Elizabethans had seen well enough the weakness of the system, and as the war continued year after year it was seen to hamper trade for no adequate return in fighting strength. Its inexpediency was as clearly marked as its impotence, but the country was not then ripe or rich enough for a change. It was the great work of Blake and his colleagues that they succeeded in effecting what Elizabeth had not ventured to attempt, and Charles had ruined himself to achieve. In these unprecedented increases to the fleet we have the beginning of the modern standing navy, the expression of the idea that the bulk of the national force upon the sea must be a permanent force. It was the natural outcome of the soldiers' administration. To them the laxity and disorder of the bastard fleets of the old days were unendurable. Again and again they had tried to introduce some kind of organisation which would enable a fleet to be handled with something like the precision of an army, but they had always failed, partly because they tried too much, but mainly because the merchantmen could not be got to obey or even see the sense of the new orders that were issued. As armies became, as they had done in recent years, more mobile and precise in their movements, the condition of things at sea became more and more unendurable to soldiers who had to do with fleets. To the men of the New Model—at that hour undoubtedly the last expression of the military art in Europe—it was impossible, and it was only by creating a naval force akin to that which they had perfected ashore that they could hope to teach the seamen the lesson they were so slow to learn and so sorely needed.

Thus it was that the definite and final appearance of England as a naval power in the Mediterranean coincided exactly with the final change in her naval system; and thus too it was that when the nations of Europe were looking askance, but as yet with no great anxiety, at the

new military state, they were suddenly awakened to the disturbing fact that it had a navy no less formidable than the army at which every one was gaping.

Along with the larger movement of the transition went certain minor changes that left their mark. With the first attempts to create a real standing navy a new system for the classification of ships was introduced, and with the ship-money fleets appears the germ of the modern system of rating. A Navy List showing the fleet divided into six rates exists as early as 1641; but, from a list ten years later, it does not appear that the classification was made on any very definite principle. The most constant factor is the number of the crew required to work the ship, and this was no doubt a good rough and ready measure of her relative importance, especially as crews were supposed to bear a general relation to tonnage. There were then only three first rates of from 60 to 100 guns. The second rates had crews of from 280 to 360 men and about 50 guns. Third rates had about 180 men and 40 to 50 guns. The fourth rates, a very large class, ran mostly from 120 to 150 men and 30 to 40 guns. In the fifth class no vessel had 100 men or over 24 guns. The sixth class included small fry of the old pinnace type, ketches, shallops and the like. Their complement was usually from 30 to 50 men. 'Frigates' appear in all the classes except the first.

Four years later—in 1655—a fresh classification was attempted, in which, owing to the increased scale of building, several of the old ships were degraded a rate. At the same time the first step was taken to give the rates a definite relation to guns, and a regular 'establishment' was laid down, though not very strictly adhered to. Thus first rates were assigned 91 guns, second rates 64, third rates 50, fourth rates 38, fifth rates 22, and sixth rates 8.

Another noticeable change was the entire disappearance of the secondary armament of small quick-firing, breech-loading guns, which had held their place throughout the Tudor period. No clear explanation of their obsolescence is to be found, but there is little doubt that it was the natural outcome of the revolution in naval tactics esta-

blished by the Elizabethans. They had lifted gun-fire to the first place, and, as boarding grew less and less in favour, the secondary armament, which was designed to clear for boarding or to repel boarders, fell with it. The same views led to the gradual diminution of superstructures, and in frigates to their entire disappearance in order to attain handiness in manœuvring for fire advantage; and with the disappearance of superstructures the secondary armament, which was mainly designed to defend them when a ship was entered, must also have inclined to disappear. The danger attending their use in the heat of action and the introduction of hand grenades may also have had something to do with it, no less than the increasing handiness and rapidity of fire of muzzle-loading guns. The English founders devised means of casting pieces lighter than had been the custom without decreasing their power. Indeed English ordnance and gunnery continued to hold their pre-eminence. The Dutch admiral De With, after his first action with Blake in 1652, could write, 'We found that the guns on their smallest frigates carry further than our heaviest cannons; and the English, I am sure, fired smarter and quicker than did many of ours.'[1] Such a startling statement must of course be discounted by remembering that De With was trying to get the States to improve his fleet; but there can be little doubt, after all allowances are made, that the navy of the Commonwealth was launched upon the Mediterranean in a state of general smartness and efficiency that had never been equalled.

[1] Gardiner, *First Dutch War* (*Navy Records Society*), ii. 360.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST RUPERT

THE impulse which finally guided England back into the Mediterranean was very remarkable. It was like the finger of destiny—the outcome of hostile machinations for which no such end could have been foreseen. It was a pious belief of the old herbalists that beside every poisonous weed there might be found growing a balm that was its antidote, and so it was that nature now seemed to deal with England.

From the same point—midway in the seventeenth century—which saw the transformation of the English navy, dates also a transformation in her foreign relations. The execution of the King may be said to have given a new colour to continental politics, at least so far as Great Britain was concerned. Their mainspring thenceforth for a century to come was the fortunes of the Stuart family. Great Britain appeared in the eyes of continental statesmen to be open to the same kind of action that they had been using so freely everywhere else, the same to which the Dutch were exposed by the differences between the Orange and the Republican parties, the same which France had been using against the Spanish Empire in Catalonia, Portugal, and the Two Sicilies, and the same which Spain was now paying back to France by her encouragement of the Fronde. It was a source of weakness to which the English Government had been a stranger since the execution of Mary Stuart, and its reappearance at this moment was the most serious menace to the position of the new military state. It was new poison, and its effects might have been extremely grave had not the antidote been found springing up beside it. As it was, the

very first effort to use the new form of attack was the means of bringing the threatened power immediately to the true method of meeting it. It was the fitting out of Rupert's squadron at Helvoetsluys and the encouragement which the new maritime war received from foreign powers that directly led to the reappearance of England in the Mediterranean.

After escaping the winter guard, Rupert and his brother proceeded direct to the coast of Munster, which from the days when Drake lay hid there, and long before, had been a kind of sanctuary for sea rovers like themselves. They were seriously under-manned; but there, if anywhere, they could hope to fill up with men of the right stamp, and with this object the Princes established themselves at Kinsale. At first the English Government did not take the matter very seriously. It was left to Ayscue and Penn, the admirals on the Irish station, to deal with. But their force soon proved inadequate. In February the Prince was reported at Bristol to have twenty-eight sail and to be rendering the adjacent seas wholly unsafe for commerce. It is true Ayscue's captains made several captures, including two of Rupert's smartest frigates. But Ireland was almost lost to the Commonwealth. Here and there her officers, like Coote, Jones, and Monk, were clinging to seaports till Cromwell could come to the rescue, and the Irish squadron could not watch the Princes and at the same time afford the desperate garrisons the relief they wanted. Moreover, Cromwell intended to land his army in Munster, and for that the command of the seas must be recovered. The serious news of Rupert's growing strength, which had come in from Bristol, was followed in a week by the appointment of Popham, Blake, and Deane to command the fleet, and their first service was that all three of them were ordered to sea to deal with the pirate Princes.

It was no more than the situation seemed to demand. Mazarin, with his eye set on the establishment of absolute monarchy in France, dreaded the infection of Republicanism as much as in Elizabethan times Philip II. had dreaded the infection of heresy. The Cardinal declared that the

cause of the Stuarts was the cause of all kings; he was hoping for a coalition to restore the exiled dynasty, and, so far as his own necessities would permit, was furthering the growth of the Stuart cause at sea. With the English Government the sense of danger was emphasised by a curious warning which seems to have had its weight. An old prophecy which was said to have been deposited in Trinity College, Cambridge, during Elizabeth's reign was brought to light. After foretelling the leading events of European history during the Thirty Years' War and down to the fall of the Stuarts, it declared that another Charles would arise, who would appear with a mighty navy on the shores of his father's kingdom and recover it by the aid of Denmark, Sweden, Holland, and France. Now it happened that these were the very powers of which Mazarin hoped to compose his coalition so soon as his hands were free from the Spanish war; and though the coincidence throws doubt on the genuineness of the prophecy, it must have added to its moral effect.[1] It is not surprising therefore to find the Council of State addressing to their Generals, on the eve of sailing, a serious exhortation that Rupert's fleet must be destroyed. It would avail little, they said, that they kept the seas clear during the summer with the large force which had been placed at their command. The prestige of the republic depended on the Prince's force being utterly shattered so that he could not boast he had maintained himself in the face of the whole navy of the Commonwealth.[2]

Having caught Rupert in Kinsale, the Generals blockaded him there and resolved to order Popham home at once, as they were strong enough without him. There during the whole summer Blake and Deane kept the revolted ships, and snapped up a number of others which they caught cruising with a Stuart commission. No attempt, however, was made to destroy Rupert's fleet in the

[1] 'The prophecy of Paulus Grebnerus,' *Domestic Calendar*, May 1649. *Mazarin's Letters* (*Documents Inédits*), iii. 225, 339; and cf. Deane to Popham, *Leybourne-Popham MSS.* Aug. 23, 1649.

[2] Council of State to the Generals at Sea, May 19, 1649, *Domestic Calendar*, p. 150.

harbour, as Leveson had destroyed the Spaniards in Castlehaven fifty years before; but this was probably due to the powerful works with which the harbour had been fortified since that time, and in any case the sound strategy of the moment was to preserve the fleet in being, and so prevent any communication between Munster and the continent till Cromwell's work in Ireland was done. The last consideration is probably the explanation of the Generals' apparent lack of enterprise, for Blake at least was ere long to show how little he feared harbour defences. As all the ports of Munster had to be watched as well as Kinsale, there was work enough for the fleet without risking anything, and it is significant that it was the Generals at Sea who most strongly urged that Cromwell should strike south first, in order to reduce the ports and so relieve the almost intolerable pressure on the fleet. So convincing indeed were their arguments that it was only through a series of accidents that Ireton was not detached to Munster from Milford Haven with a wing of the Lord General's army.[1]

By midsummer the blockading fleet was in so serious a condition that Deane had to be sent away with part of it to recruit, and Blake was left alone. For three months more he hung on, refusing, as we have seen, every inducement to let go his prey, till with the approach of the equinox he found it necessary to send home his largest vessels. Shifting his flag to a third-rate, he still held his ground, watching anxiously for Cromwell, whose victorious army was already pressing southward. His task was now doubly difficult. As the pressure from the north made Rupert's position every day less secure, so the boisterous weather rendered the blockade more difficult, till some time about the last week in October a gale forced the blockading squadron to stand off to sea, and by the time it could gather again Rupert had flown.[2]

[1] Deane to Popham, July 3, 1649, *Leybourne-Popham MSS.* (*Hist. MSS. Com.*) p. 19; same to same, Sept. 22, *ibid.* p. 40; cf. *Ormonde MSS.* July 10, ii. 99–102.

[2] The exact date of his escape is not certain. Heath's *Chronicle* (p. 254) gives it as October 24, but the Council of State in London knew of it

Seven vessels were all he could carry out. The rest he was unable either to man or to equip, and he had to leave them laid up to fall into Cromwell's hands. But his little fleet still included the revolted navy ships that were left to him, and, with Scilly for a base, he was still dangerous. He had told the royal exiles some months before that, even if he were forced from Kinsale, he doubted not, as he wrote, 'ere long to see Scilly a second Venice . . . where after a little we may get the King a good subsistence, and I believe we shall make shift to live in spite of all factions.'[1] The Council of State were not a little anxious. The Canary merchantmen were nearly due in the Channel, and if Rupert caught them he would have a new fleet at a stroke, besides the rich spoil. He was actually reported to be lying off the Land's End waiting for them, but as a matter of fact he knew the activity of the Generals had made the Narrow Seas too hot to hold him, and he had borne away out into the ocean. For a month he was lost sight of, but on December 1 came news that he was capturing English merchantmen off the coast of Spain, and the Generals at Sea immediately received an order to fit out a squadron of ten sail to hunt him away. And so was set on foot the fleet that was once more to carry the English flag into the Mediterranean.

The commander that would naturally have been chosen was 'Black' Deane, as he was called, the junior of the three Generals. The outlook at the time was so serious that it was natural to wish to keep the senior ones at home. The news was that Rupert was off Cadiz, negotiating for permission to sell his prizes in Spanish ports and use them as he wished. Both in the Spanish Netherlands and in France similar permission had been granted to Stuart privateers, and there was every chance that Rupert would succeed in his desire. As no foreign Government had yet recognised the Republic, negotiations were im-

on October 27, *Domestic Calendar*, p. 366. On October 2 they had heard that three of his vessels had escaped in a storm, but it was not certain that Rupert was with them, *Leybourne-Popham MSS.* p. 43.

[1] Warburton, iii. 220.

possible. France was even claiming to treat British commerce as pirate goods, that were fair game for every man, and relations in consequence had grown so severely strained that war was looked for at any moment. As it happened, Deane was ill. But there was no time to be lost. Blake was in the west, on his way from Ireland, and the Council of State, without consulting any one, ordered him to proceed straight to Portsmouth and take up the command without coming to London. At the same time the Trinity House was ordered to furnish sailing directions for the Mediterranean, and bills were to be prepared on Leghorn and other places to provide the fleet with money.[1]

Clearly a demonstration in the Mediterranean was intended if the chase should lead thither. The preparations were pushed on with unprecedented vigour, and grew as they proceeded. On January 10, 1650, a captain who had been watching the French coast reported to Popham a great naval activity. Every one said it was to reinforce Rupert, and the anxious officer begged his chief not to let the fleet that was ordered 'for the Straits' to go forth ill-manned. The Secretary of the Admiralty at the same time assured Popham that his only fear was that the fleet was too weak to enter the Straits, and that it was to be doubled. The fact was that Mazarin had taken alarm. Bordeaux was in rebellion; he was blockading it from the sea; and he had been informed that the English preparations against Rupert were really intended for its relief.[2]

It was but natural that Mazarin should expect from the men he so deeply despised a repetition of the idle strategy of Buckingham's war. So obvious was the move that we can only wonder at the brilliance of the new spirit that was infusing English policy. In spite of news of further naval preparations in Ostend and elsewhere, which might seem to be the beginning of the prophesied

[1] *Domestic Calendar*, 424–425, 489.

[2] Captain Keyser to Popham, January 10, 1650; Coytmor to Popham and Blake, January 12, *Leybourne-Popham MSS.* 54. Mazarin to the Duc d'Epernon, *Lettres*, iii. 432.

coalition, neither the Government nor the Generals were to be turned from the true objective. First and foremost it was Rupert's fleet, and then the Mediterranean. Since it had become known that it was in a Portuguese and not a Spanish port that Rupert had been received, the latter object became even more remote. Blake was to be hurried to Lisbon immediately with such ships as could be got ready, and Popham was to follow in the spring with a reserve and the bills on Leghorn. There was a possibility that the demonstration in the Mediterranean would not be necessary, for Spain was already opening her eyes to the value of an alliance with the Republic as an enemy of France and Portugal, and Blake was to carry out an envoy to Madrid. When in February he got to sea his instructions were mainly concerned with directions to deal with the Princes and their 'revolted ships,' and with those of any commander, no matter what his commission, who attempted to join them.

Meanwhile Rupert at Lisbon had been as active. With the produce of his captured cargoes he had managed to thoroughly equip not only his old fleet but also his three prizes, and he had already dropped down the Tagus as far as Belem Castle to start on a fresh cruise when Blake's fleet was seen anchoring just outside in Cascaes Bay. At the last moment the younger Vane had joined the fleet as envoy to the King of Portugal, and he was immediately landed with the Parliament's letter explaining that Blake had been sent out to recover their revolted warships and punish the pirates who had taken them. He was followed by the lieutenant of Blake's flagship with a friendly message pointing out that it was clearly a special providence that the two arch-pirates had been detained at Lisbon till his squadron had arrived, and he trusted, therefore, the King would excuse any hostile attempt that might be made upon them in the harbour, as there was no other way of making it. It would seem that in this spirit Blake actually made an attempt to enter the river. But as the finger of Providence was not so clear to the King of Portugal as it was to the Commonwealth admiral, warning guns from the batteries forced

him to return to his anchorage and proceed with the negotiations.

On March 18, about a week after Blake's arrival, Vane succeeded in making a preliminary agreement, by which, in case of bad weather, Blake was to be permitted to enter the river and anchor in Oeiras Bay—the road which lies between the outer defences of St. Julian's Castle and the inner at Belem. But no hostilities were to take place, and he was to retire outside again so soon as the weather permitted. This of course would never do, and a few days later Blake sent in his vice-admiral to demand either the restitution of the revolted ships or permission to seize them by force where they lay, or in the alternative a peremptory order for both fleets to leave the harbour at the same time. If all these proposals were refused he was to demand liberty of the port in accordance with subsisting treaties.

Meanwhile, however, an accredited envoy had arrived from Charles II., and, in pursuance of the same treaties, was making demands in the opposite sense, and requesting the King to refuse all recognition of the Commonwealth.[1] For all parties it was a situation of extreme difficulty. The King could not make up his mind, and Blake had no real authority, even if he had the power to force his hand. It looked like another long summer blockade with the additional danger that any day a French or some other foreign squadron might appear to join hands with Rupert. This was what the English Government chiefly feared, and they were stirring every nerve to get the second division out, with Popham in person at its head, and with such instructions as would leave no room for hesitation. Still it was not till the middle of April that he could hoist his flag, and a month more before he finally cleared the Channel with the 'Resolution,' a first rate, one second rate, two fourth rates, and four powerful armed merchantmen.[2]

[1] Thomas Elyott to John IV. of Portugal, March 19 (n.s.), 1650, *Hodgkin MSS.* (*Hist. MSS. Com.* xv. ii.) p. 120.

[2] Popham's Journal of the voyage is in the *Leybourne-Popham MSS.* p. 61 *et seq.*

The result of these provoking delays was that what was feared had happened. Two French men-of-war, of 50 and 28 guns, had appeared off Lisbon to join the Princes, but their captains mistook the English fleet for Rupert's, and Blake was able quietly to take possession of them. Still as yet he had no authority to make reprisals on the French, and when the King demanded the release of the vessels he felt bound to let them go free. It was not till they had joined Rupert that Blake heard that the Portuguese Court had finally made up its mind to stand with the Royalists. Then he did not hesitate to act. On May 16, as Popham was clearing the Channel on his way south, the annual Brazil fleet, consisting of eighteen sail, came out of the Tagus. He had no definite instruction to seize Portuguese ships; but nine of them were English chartered for the voyage, and as a British admiral he had the usual authority to compel the services of all English ships he met. The nine vessels were therefore stayed, and with the ready consent of the crews he added them to his force.

Ten days later Popham stood into Cascaes Bay and showed Blake the additional instructions he had brought. By these the admirals were authorised to attack the Princes wherever they found them. If the King of Portugal offered any objection, they were to make reprisals on all Portuguese ships, and they were further expressly directed to make general reprisals on the subjects and ships of the French King. This was tantamount to the declaration of a naval war with both Portugal and France, and as the force at the Generals' disposal now consisted of about twenty navy ships and over a dozen armed merchantmen, they were quite in a position to make themselves felt.

To the King of Spain the situation was eminently satisfactory. The whole of his naval force that could be spared from its ordinary duties was being concentrated at Palermo under Don John of Austria for the recovery of the places which the French had seized in Tuscany, and nothing could suit him better than to see England drawn into a naval war with his two hereditary enemies.

Though he still delayed his recognition of the Commonwealth, Ascham, its diplomatic agent, had been received at Cadiz with marked respect, and the Royalist envoys with coldness. This clearing of the diplomatic air was, however, suddenly checked. Ascham reached Madrid the very day Popham cast anchor in Cascaes Bay, and on the morrow he was brutally murdered at his inn by some cavalier swashbucklers. This outrage was of course unknown to the Generals; but before taking any hostile step against the Portuguese they decided it was better to send for Vane and provide for his safety. He came to the fleet, and as soon as he saw what the Parliament's new instructions were, he determined not to return. Thereupon a formal demand for the revolted ships was sent in by Blake's lieutenant, and four days were given for an answer, so imperious had the note of the Republic become. The time passed without any reply, and when at last it came it was so unsatisfactory that the Generals resolved to begin operations.

Blake's original division by this time was very short of water and beverage, and a small French squadron was reported to be hovering about Cadiz, seeking for an opportunity of joining Rupert. As a first step, therefore, he transferred his flag to Popham's ship and sent his own, the 'George,' with seven more of his squadron to the southward. They were placed under the command of his rear-admiral, Richard Badiley, a seaman officer of whom a great deal more was to be heard, with instructions to cruise for the Frenchmen and, after dealing with them, to procure from Cadiz all that was wanted.[1] Another frigate was detached to watch to the northward and water at the Burlings, while the 'Constant Warwick' was sent home with Vane to report to the Government. At the same time reprisals were commenced by seizing all the fishing boats within reach, and some of these were armed for inshore work. The main squadron that was left off Lisbon, thus reduced, consisted chiefly of

[1] Gardiner's *First Dutch War*, i. 2, and *Leybourne-Popham MSS.* p. 67.

merchantmen, and with it the Generals settled down to the blockade.

Though a few small vessels got through, it proved very effective, and the only warship that attempted to run in was captured. Still all June passed away, Badiley's squadron did not return, and drink got lower and lower. Information too was received that the King of Portugal was making extensive naval preparations in order to join Rupert in driving the English off. The rest of Blake's old division had to be sent north for water, and the situation was growing critical. It was not till the middle of July that one of the frigates rejoined from Cadiz. She had to report that they had found three ships of the French navy at anchor in Lagos Bay. By promptly cutting their cables and being clean, two had escaped, but the third of 36 guns was brought to action by the 'Adventure,' a ship of equal force, and after a long engagement forced to surrender. So hard was the fight, and so heavy the English fire, that she went down two hours after striking.[1] As for the rest of Badiley's squadron, the Generals were assured they would speedily rejoin with all that was wanted. It was none too soon. Four more days passed, and still the wind hung in the north and kept the longed-for vessels away. To make matters worse a number of ships were seen dropping down from Lisbon, till, by the 22nd, more than a score were lying at anchor in Oeiras Bay, and still there was no sign of the missing squadron. Truly might the Generals say, as they wrote home to the Council of State, 'It hath pleased God in this place to exercise us with various and mixed providences.' Four more days passed without any news of Badiley's ships, nor had any sign of them appeared when

[1] An account of the action is in Gibson's 'Reminiscences' (Gardiner's *First Dutch War*, i. 2). As an indication of the English methods of relying on gun fire, it may be noted that 'the "Adventure" men called on their captain to board the French ship, which he denied until he could see the blood run out of their scuppers.' Gibson says there were four ships, and he is borne out by Gentillot's 'Draft Instructions' (Guizot, *Hist. de la République Anglaise*, I. app. xvii.). It is there stated that the captain of the captured ship was the Chevalier de Fonteny, and that he was 'tué réellement après la prise.' Possibly, however, this refers to another case See a similar story, *post*, p. 189, *note*.

the morning of the 26th broke with a fair wind off the shore and Rupert was seen coming out. Twenty-six ships and eighteen caravels could be counted, and against these the Generals had only ten sail to show besides the requisitioned Brazil vessels. But they did not hesitate a moment. The largest of the French ships was leading with four fire-ships, and about a mile astern of them came the 'Constant Reformation,' the Prince's flagship. To avoid the fire-ships the Generals weighed immediately and stood off to sea, but as soon as a reasonable offing was obtained they lay to and waited. Still the enemy had the wind and held on; but presently it shifted a bit to the southward. The blockading fleet immediately filled away, and, having with a short tack secured the weather gage, made a dash in to cut off the leading ships. But the moment the enemy saw they had lost the windward position they drew back, and were soon standing in again on their course with the Generals in full chase. A few shots were exchanged, but that was all, and as night fell the Princes were safe again under the Portuguese guns.

For both sides it was a disappointment. Rupert had failed to get out and the Generals had failed to bring him to action. The blockaders had been perhaps too eager, and next morning, when the attempt was renewed in a dense fog, the Generals stood off as soon as they discovered the Prince's purpose. In vain they lay to, and let him get dead to weather of them, hoping thus to induce him to attack; but again the day passed away without result. The Generals were now getting desperate. They had but four days' drink left, and could not hold on much longer. But, as the evening closed in, the situation changed. Seven sail were seen in the offing, and, in grave anxiety lest they meant the long-feared relief from France, the Generals stood out to meet them. They proved to be Badiley's missing division from Cadiz, and at daylight they joined. During the morning every captain had all he needed in abundance, and the whole fleet stood in to attack. But the wind held stubbornly to the eastward and every effort was unavailing. That night, however, they anchored close in with cables short-hauled, hoping

to surprise their enemy in the morning; but when day broke there was not a sail to be seen. Rupert had abandoned his attempt to escape, and the weary blockade had to begin again.

Not for another month were the Princes able to renew their attempt. It was in the first week of September. Blake was alone plying off the Rock of Lisbon with only ten sail. The Brazil merchantmen had been sent home as no longer able to keep the sea. Most of the other ships had just gone with Popham to refit at Cadiz.[1] The morning of the 7th was again foggy, but about eleven o'clock Blake was aware that the Portuguese fleet and part of Rupert's were putting to sea. Then it would seem he lost them again; but about four in the afternoon the fog cleared, and he found himself, with only two frigates in company, close to the whole of the hostile fleet, numbering thirty-six sail, with Rupert leading. It was a perilous position, but 'by God's good providence,' as Blake wrote, the enemy were to leeward of him. Without any hesitation at the overwhelming disparity of numbers, the General bore down to engage the Prince's ship. Rupert was nothing loath, and, having given orders to reserve his fire, held on to close in silence. So at last the two antagonists were at arm's length. Neither would give way; but Blake's master pointed out that, holding as they were, it was very doubtful if they could weather the Prince. 'Can you stem him?'—that is 'ram' him—asked the General. 'Yes,' said the master, 'but then we shall hazard both ships.' 'I'll run that hazard,' Blake answered, 'rather than bear up for the enemy;' and they held on.[2] Seeing a collision was inevitable, Rupert gave way, and as he bore up Blake, who could trust his gunners better than the Prince, let fly. So just was his aim that Rupert's fore-topmast came crashing down at the cap. Hopelessly disabled for the moment, the Prince was forced

[1] The absence of Popham is to be inferred from the fact that his flagship was one of the vessels detached, and that Blake alone signed the despatch relating to the incident. *Hist. MSS. Com.* xiii. i. 536.

[2] Gibson's 'Reminiscences' in Gardiner's *Dutch War*, i. 13. Blake to the Council of State, October 14, 1650, *Hist. MSS. Com.* xiii. i. 536.

to bear up into the shelter of the Portuguese fleet, and as he did so the fog closed down again, and Blake very wisely bore away to get touch with the rest of his ships. It was not till next morning that he found them, and then it was known that once more the Princes had been forced to withdraw into the Tagus. It was practically the end of the blockade, and that rift in the mist was the only chance the two opposing admirals ever had of looking into the muzzles of each other's guns.

At so late a period of the year it was hopeless to think of destroying Rupert as he was. But a more effective method of dealing with the situation was at hand. The homeward bound fleet from Brazil was daily expected, and in its capture Blake saw a means of making the King of Portugal weary of his guest. A month before the home Government had suggested to the Generals the advisability of sending a squadron to intercept it at the Azores, but they had wisely declined to divide their force. Their wisdom was now to be rewarded. A week after the encounter with Rupert the Brazil fleet, to the number of twenty-three sail, was sighted making for the Tagus. Blake gave chase, and after a three-hours' fight succeeded in destroying the vice-flagship and capturing the rear-admiral and six other vessels, with four thousand chests of sugar and four hundred prisoners. Having administered this sharp chastisement to the Portuguese Government, he carried his prizes into Cadiz and left the Tagus open.

The reason of this move is nowhere given. Blake has been blamed for its consequences, but there was certainly much to be said for the course he took. The situation which the Commonwealth had to face when Blake began his campaign had entirely changed. Ireland had been reduced to submission; Scotland had been paralysed by Cromwell's victory at Dunbar; and the great Royalist reaction, which Rupert's fleet had been designed to support from the sea, was well in hand without his having been able to give it any real assistance. Between them the Generals at Sea had been able to prevent any dangerous concentration round his flag, and he was reduced to the

position of a mere buccaneer. Whatever Blake's information may have been, he might justly have concluded that the King of Portugal would now be only too glad to get rid of so costly and discredited a guest, and that the best chance of finally destroying him was to see him a friendless wanderer on the high seas. In British waters he could do no harm, for Popham was back there with his division; and if he attempted to find refuge in the Mediterranean, Blake at Cadiz was in a position to chase with a practical certainty of success. Short therefore of forcing the King of Portugal to deliver up his supplicant, a course he was most unlikely to take, Blake could not have done better than give him a chance of honourably getting rid of the Prince's presence.

How lightly Blake regarded Rupert's force is clear from the dispositions he now made. Popham, as has been said, had already gone home to resume his duties in the Channel. Five more vessels, including his flagship, were now detached under Captain Badiley to escort home the Brazil prizes and a convoy of Levant merchantmen that had rendezvoused within the Straits at Malaga. Blake himself, with the seven ships that remained, resolved to stay out a month or more longer, contrary to all precedent, 'to do the Commonwealth'—so he wrote—'all the service I can hereabout or elsewhere, as the providence of God shall direct me.' There can be no doubt he was thoroughly prepared for what followed. Shortly after the capture of the Brazil ships some kind of unofficial negotiations seem to have been commenced with the Court of Lisbon for a preliminary arrangement by which reprisals were to cease on condition that Rupert's fleet should no longer receive protection in Portuguese harbours. The result of these overtures, according to Royalist authority, was that some time in September the Princes were formally requested to leave.[1]

It was on October 12 that they put to sea with six sail, and for some days, as it would appear, they hung about off the Tagus looking for a Frenchman who was expected to join them. Blake at all events got no news

[1] Warburton, iii. 313.

of the movement. Not expecting his recent feat to have so immediate an effect, he was still in Cadiz busily cleaning his ships for the winter cruise. It was not till two days after Rupert had put to sea that Badiley's squadron started for home, and on the morrow a despatch vessel arrived from England which put Blake into immediate activity. What the message was that it brought is not certain, but there can be little doubt that it ordered him to turn his attention to active reprisals upon the French. Under cover of the exiled King's flag they had continued to prey on the commerce of the Commonwealth in a manner that was scarcely removed from piracy. They had imprisoned her merchants and confiscated their goods. In vain the English Government had protested, and at last its patience was exhausted. It was not till the day the despatch vessel reached Blake that the Judges of the Admiralty reported, apparently in answer to French protests, that justice had been demanded in the French courts and had been refused, and that therefore general reprisals were perfectly lawful. Their decision was a foregone conclusion, and the Council of State could hardly have waited for it before letting Blake know what was coming. At all events, the moment he received the despatches he hoisted his flag in the 'Phœnix,' a fourth rate, and with three other frigates, which were all he had ready for sea, hurried out to take up a station in the Straits' mouth. Here, after a four days' cruise, he fell in with a French navy ship of 36 guns, under the command of a certain Chevalier de la Lande. Deceived by seeing the Admiral's flag flying on the 'Phœnix' into believing himself overmatched, the Chevalier came aboard to surrender; but, on seeing how weak the ship was, instead of delivering his sword he began to insinuate he had been trepanned into coming aboard. Therefore Blake, in a spirit of almost Quixotic chivalry more characteristic of an Elizabethan than a hard-headed Parliamentary officer, told the Frenchman to return to his ship and fight it out. He did so, but nothing could induce his crew to handle a gun, and finally he had to come aboard again and surrender his ship—'of such dread,' writes

a seaman of the time, 'was the English courage and sea conduct then.'[1]

We may assume that this was the vessel that Rupert was looking for. It was certainly the object of Blake's move, and he immediately returned to Cadiz to pick up the rest of his ships and to add the prize to his squadron. No step could have been more unlucky. It was on October 20 that the Frenchman was captured, and a week later intelligence reached Blake at Cadiz that on the 26th Rupert had appeared at Malaga and attempted to destroy some English merchantmen in the harbour. While Blake's back was turned the Princes, having failed to find their French consort, had entered the Straits without her. It was their only chance. 'Being destitute of a port,' wrote one of their followers, 'we take the confines of the Mediterranean for our harbours, poverty and despair being companions, and revenge our guide.'

In a moment Blake was on their heels. There was no time to get the prize ready, and it had to be left behind. With his other seven ships he reached Malaga on the 30th, and the same day was away again for Alicante. He had heard that Rupert had lawlessly burnt some English vessels in Velez Malaga, in spite of the Spanish protests, and had passed on.[2] 'I intend,' he wrote home

[1] This story, which was told shortly by Whitelocke, has been of late years dismissed by naval historians as utterly incredible, mainly because neither Blake nor his captain, Saltonstall, mentions it (*Hist. MSS. Com.* xiii. i. 538, 543). Blake merely says, 'After some dispute he yielded upon quarter.' But Whitelocke's story is confirmed and explained by the recently discovered 'Reminiscences' of Gibson (*Dutch War*, i. 7). The prize, which was brought into the navy as the 'Success,' was the 'Jules,' a vessel that had been serving before Bordeaux under the command of M. le Chevalier de la Lande (Jal, *Du Quesne*, i. 182, and Gentillot's draft instructions, Guizot, *Hist. de la République Anglaise*, i. *App.* xvii. 465). Blake says he was 'brother to him that was sunk by the "Adventure" frigate.' These two brothers seem to have been among the most active French officers who had been preying on English commerce. The French have an incredible story that one of them, some time before this, had endeavoured to force an English squadron to lower their flags to his own, and, being captured for his temerity, was there and then beheaded for a pirate (Jal, *op. cit.* p. 187). The Chevalier is again mentioned in an unsavoury piece of intelligence work in Mazarin's *Letters*, iii. 761.

[2] The excuse which Rupert is said to have given for defying the port authorities was that he wanted to catch Captain Morley, 'one of the four

under sail, 'God willing, to pursue as far as Providence shall direct.' He had clean freshly-victualled ships to his hand and had nothing to stop him. On November 2, after turning Cape Gata, he captured another Frenchman of twenty guns, and on the morrow, close to Cape Palos, he fell in with the 'Roebuck' of Rupert's squadron, and forced her to strike. The next night he chased two more of the Prince's vessels, with two prizes in company, into Cartagena. The fact was that Rupert, finding the Governors of the Spanish ports were determined not to submit to his lawless depredations, had retired towards the Balearic islands, with the intention of cruising between the islands and the Spanish coast. While thus engaged he was overtaken by a gale that scattered his force, and some of them had stood in towards the coast, while he and his brother in the 'Reformation' and 'Swallow' had held on for the rendezvous he had appointed in the almost deserted island of Formentara. There, under a stone marked with a white flag, he left directions for his consorts to find him. The paper still exists.[1] It orders that all prizes shall be carried to Sardinia, and thence, if he was not found in Cagliari Bay, his captains were to send to him for further instructions to the port which he had already fixed for his destination. As Blake suspected, it was Toulon, and thither the two Princes presently made their way.

Meanwhile Blake had put into Cartagena, and, having driven ashore another of Rupert's ships that was endeavouring to enter the harbour, was demanding the surrender of the others in no humble key. 'It is of very high consequence to the Parliament of England,' he wrote to the Governor, 'and may be of no small concernment to his Majesty (the King of Spain) to give this business a speedy and present despatch, that, being master of these ships which are come into this harbour, I may be at liberty to pursue, and by God's blessing to seize upon,

and chiefest traitors who had signed the sentence of death of the King of Great Britain, his uncle' (*Hist. MSS. Com.* xiii. i. 548). No one of that name signed the death warrant.

[1] *Welbeck MSS.* (*Hist. MSS. Com.* xlii. i.) 539. It is dated Nov. 5–15.

the remainder of their strength before they join themselves with the French, which is likely to be their last refuge.'

It was an argument well calculated to appeal to the Spanish Government, and Blake's broad appreciation of the political significance of his fleet is another mark of his high qualifications as an admiral. It will be remembered that Don John had been gathering at Messina a fleet to take advantage of the command of the sea which the troubles in France had left in Spanish hands. The opportunity had been used with success, and during the summer he had recovered all that the Spaniards had lost in Tuscany. On Michaelmas day, however, Mazarin had succeeded in arranging a pacification by which Bordeaux had returned to its allegiance. The sore which the Spaniards had kept open so long was healed, and at such a moment an addition to the French strength in the Mediterranean was the last thing they wished to see. The situation equally emphasised the importance of being on the best possible terms with the new military republic which was so viciously showing its teeth within the Straits. Accordingly, the officials at Cartagena were extremely polite, but protested they could do nothing without instructions, and finally induced Blake to consent to hold his hand till they had communicated with Madrid. But for this Rupert's men dared not wait. The next day they made a desperate attempt to get to sea, and, in endeavouring to weather the blockading force, were all driven ashore and totally wrecked.

It was enough for Blake. Contenting himself with writing a letter to the King to demand the guns, cables, and anchors of the wrecked ships, he left one of his vessels with the two French prizes to receive them, and himself sailed in chase of Rupert and Maurice. He had captured papers which disclosed the rendezvous in the Balearic islands, and there he sought his quarry. As we know, the Princes were already flown, but Blake must have discovered Rupert's fresh instructions, and perhaps proceeded as far as Sardinia in search of him. At all events, it was not till after a three weeks' cruise that he

was back at Cartagena, where he must have learned that the Princes had been received in Toulon and were out of his reach.

But his work was done and he might well rest satisfied with its result. 'Indeed,' wrote one of his captains, 'the Lord hath proved us exceedingly, since we have had little of the arm of the flesh amongst us—I mean, since our great and powerful fleet of so many ships were reduced only to a little squadron of ten ships under the command of Colonel Blake: for since then we have taken the Brazil fleet, and after that, our squadron being now but three ships and four frigates, we have taken three French ships and destroyed and taken all Rupert's ships, seven in number, only two now remaining. And thus hath God owned us in the midst of our implacable enemies, so that the terror of God is amongst them. Five chaseth a hundred, and ten a thousand, which is marvellous in our eyes. The Spaniards are now exceeding kind unto us.' It was true enough. If they had been friendly ever since Popham and Blake took a high hand with Portugal, they were almost obsequious now. The pariah state had stretched out its hand into the Mediterranean and could no longer be ignored. On the very day the pious captain wrote his letter, Philip IV. recognised the Commonwealth by signing letters of credence for an ambassador who was to proceed to London in order to apologise for Ascham's murder, and to promise the punishment of the culprits, and shelter for the English fleets in Spanish ports. Portugal too was hurrying off an agent to try to come to terms, and it could not be long before the rest would have to do the same. Blake's work was indeed done, and shortly afterwards he went round to Cadiz to return home.

But of all this nothing was known at home; even his exploit on the Brazil fleet had not yet been heard of in London. All the Government knew was that Rupert had escaped from Lisbon, and their faith in the soldier they had trusted was broken. By a strange irony, as Blake was in the act of destroying Rupert's fleet as an effective force, they were sending out to supersede him.

The officer selected was William Penn, a seaman born and bred, who, though not yet thirty years old, had for the past two or three years been serving the Parliament as a flag-officer on the Irish station. His instructions were to go South with such ships as could be spared from the Winter Guard, take over from Blake any of his squadron that might still be fit for sea, and order him home.[1]

The appointment is highly significant. From his boyhood Penn had been carefully trained under his father for the naval service. All his life he had been afloat, and the selection of such a man, who indeed was destined to live as the typical representative of the old seaman school, marks in the clearest possible way the revulsion of feeling that was going on at headquarters. For the moment it looked as though the Commonwealth was about to abandon its policy of soldier admirals. But their distrust of the Colonel who was to shed so much lustre on their naval administration did not last long. Even before Penn had actually left the Channel with his first division the Council of State had received Blake's letter from Malaga, announcing that he had entered the Mediterranean, and meant, God willing, to pursue the Princes wherever Providence should direct.[2]

It was enough to show them the mistake they were making. Penn's instructions were modified, and fresh orders were sent to Blake to stay where he was with the force he had at his command and finish what he had begun so well; and finally, when the second division of Penn's fleet sailed, it carried orders that he was to place himself under Blake's command. With Blake in the Mediterranean, and in such a temper as his letter disclosed, there was nothing to fear. 'The seven ships left with Colonel Blake,' wrote Vane to Cromwell, 'are very likely to be the total ruin of Rupert's fleet and a great terror to the French. This hath made the Spaniard solemnly acknowledge us. Portugal likewise stands knocking at the door. . . .' So they rightly read the effect of their flag being displayed within the Straits. In the same week

[1] Council of State to Blake, Nov. 2, 1650. Thurloe, *S.P.* i. 166.
[2] Council of State Proceedings, Dec. 13, 1650. *Dom. Cal.* p. 468.

that they sent Blake his new orders and Penn cleared the Channel, the French agent, who was trying to treat unofficially, was ordered to quit the kingdom, the Portuguese envoy was refused a hearing, and the new Spanish Ambassador, in solemn act before Parliament, recognised the pariah state.

As it happened, the new orders for Blake never reached him, but none the less did he reap the reward of what he had already achieved. On January 8, 1651, his proceedings were approved by Parliament, and he was ordered to be thanked. Early in February he was back in England. On the 13th he had the honour of making his relation to the House of 'the wonderful appearance of the powerful hand of God with him in his service at sea,' and was thereupon voted a grant of a thousand pounds 'for his great and faithful service.'

CHAPTER XIV

THE FIRST MEDITERRANEAN SQUADRON

BLAKE'S return in modest triumph at the beginning of 1651, and the sailing of the two squadrons that were to relieve him, mark the definite adoption by England of a policy of activity in the Mediterranean. Through the half century that had come to an end we have traced the complex forces that had been drawing her reluctantly to her destiny. We have seen her appearing in her new sphere, at first piratically, in spite of herself, much as she had begun her career upon the ocean. We have watched the effects of that appearance as it rapidly revolutionised the old Italian conditions by the dominating power of the sailing war-vessel and the seamanship of the North. One by one, every government that had its seat around the land-girt sea was made to feel the meaning of the change, and with every shift of European politics we have heard some fresh voice calling down the Northern powers to adjust the scale. Every time that call was answered, however faintly, we have seen the great continental struggle change its stride as soldiers and diplomatists, barely conscious of the cause, shifted uneasily at their work from end to end of Europe. There had been moments when it seemed that England, by using the arena that was opened to her, might have interfered almost like a *deus ex machina*. Yet still she held back, as she has done soberly before almost every decisive step that has led her to greatness.

But now her hour had come, and the new and vigorous blood that was tingling in the veins of her Government set her boldly forward. The revolting sacrifice with which she had consecrated her liberties had outraged

all Europe. By general consent she was treated as an outcast among nations, and scarcely had the new administration recognised its ostracism before it saw the way to bring Europe to reason. Spain was the first to fall; for of all the great powers she was the one that lay most exposed to the new weapon. She had besides an hereditary dread of English enmity, and her exhausting struggle with France had done everything to emphasise the importance of an English alliance. Still so violent was her antipathy to the regicide Government, that even in the depth of her distress she could not bring herself to hold out a hand. Yet, with the first exhibition of the new force that the Commonwealth was able to display, her reserve had broken down. Blake had but to enter the Mediterranean and deliver his sounding blow on Rupert for all hesitation to vanish, and in a month or two a special ambassador was in London, and the outcast Government had been recognised by what was still regarded as the proudest and most powerful Court in Europe. Small wonder then if the Commonwealth, in spite of the serious calls upon its navy in the Narrow Seas, resolved to continue the policy which Blake had so successfully inaugurated.

It must not be supposed, however, that this policy was adopted entirely or quite consciously for political reasons. It was rather a reaction of that great internal change which, as we have seen, finally established the navy on its modern footing. Henceforward the national navy was to be a regular force of Government ships, built and maintained for war alone. In sympathy with the growth of standing armies, merchantmen, however powerful, were to be relegated to the position they have occupied ever since. Though still to be used as occasional auxiliaries, they were no longer to be counted on for the strength of the navy, but, on the contrary, were to be regarded as one of its burdens. No change in our naval history is greater or more far-reaching than this. It was no mere change of organisation; it was a revolution in the fundamental conception of naval defence. For the first time the protection of the mercantile marine came to be regarded

almost as the chief end for which the regular navy existed, and the whole of naval strategy underwent a profound modification in English thought.

In Spain this idea of the functions of a navy had existed from the time when Philip II. had revived his marine for the protection of his oceanic commerce. In the Mediterranean it had also existed since the rise of the Mussulman corsairs; but France and the Italian states, no less than Spain, had confined it practically to operations within the Straits. Similarly, although the germ of the idea had always existed in England, it had been confined to the Narrow Seas. For nearly two centuries it had been the custom for the royal navy to provide a regular escort, or 'wafters' as they were called, for the annual wine and wool fleets in the Bay of Biscay, the Channel, and the North Sea; but all ships trading to the Levant had been expected to take care of themselves. The other Northern powers had acted on the same principle. Of late years, it is true, the Dutch had somewhat extended the theory by maintaining a regular squadron about the Straits, and we have seen how James I. attempted to do the same. The effort came to little, for it was premature so long as the old theory of a navy existed. To the Commonwealth it was left to add the lasting reform to all the others which it attempted with less success, and it was the consequent revolution in strategy that perhaps even more than purely political considerations pushed her into the Mediterranean.

The revolution cannot be too strongly insisted on. It is the failure to appreciate its importance that has led to the keynote of the naval policy of the time being so little noticed. When strategists of the seventeenth century speak of the Mediterranean, it is almost always in terms of commerce protection, and we are thus inclined to miss the political significance that underlay their utterance. We forget that so soon as the mercantile marine became a recognised burden on the navy, the main lines of commerce became also the main lines of naval strategy, and the crossing of the trade routes its focal points. Thus, although strategists, for the purpose of commending

their views to the public and the Treasury, naturally wrote in terms of commerce, we must never forget that what they were really aiming at was the command of the sea by the domination of the great trade routes and the acquisition of focal points as naval stations.

Before ever Blake had entered the Mediterranean we see the process at work. It will be remembered that when, in 1650, he was alone before Lisbon, he had requisitioned out of the Portuguese Brazil fleet some English merchantmen to strengthen his blockading squadron. These vessels he and Popham subsequently sent home as being unfit in their opinion for active operations with the navy ships. This was in September. On the last day of October Parliament passed an act for adding fifteen per cent. to the customs, and directing that the money so raised should be used in defraying the cost of regular men-of-war to convoy merchantmen, and early in December Captain Hall was appointed to command a squadron for convoy duty to the Mediterranean. The immediate cause of this memorable departure was the reckless way in which the French were making use of the Stuart flag to prey on British commerce. At the time the act was passed it was said that French privateers had captured or destroyed five thousand tons of English shipping, together with some four hundred guns and cargoes valued at half a million. It is true the contra side of the account was mounting up rapidly since general reprisals had been authorised, but it was clear the force of private merchantmen, which had so long sufficed, would no longer serve against the growing excellence of the French men-of-war.

Thus, when Penn was ordered to supersede Blake, he was given to understand that a second division would follow him under Hall in a month or two. The understanding was apparently that Hall was to regard himself as under Penn's flag, with the restriction that Penn was to have no power to divert Hall's ships from their special convoy duties in the Mediterranean. As we have seen, the final instructions which Penn received before sailing had been largely modified. Instead of superseding Blake

he was merely ordered to attempt the capture of a second Brazil fleet, which the Government knew was on its way home. In view of Blake's blockade of Lisbon they expected that the Portuguese authorities would stop the ships at the Azores. At the Azores, therefore, Penn was ordered to take up his station. He was given to understand that his further instructions would be sent to him at Vigo in Galicia, and whether or not he was able to intercept his quarry, he was to be at Vigo without fail by the end of December.[1]

He had but four frigates with him, for these were all that could be spared from the Irish and Western squadrons which he had been commanding. Captain Jordan, now one of the most trusted of the Commonwealth's officers, was to bring him out for a flagship the recently launched 'Fairfax' so soon as she was ready for sea. So well timed was his sailing that, even before he reached his station, he fell in with and captured a Brazil ship. To his deep chagrin, however, it proved to be only a straggler from the main fleet of sixty-three sail, and he knew it must have already passed the islands. To retrieve his ill-luck he was for immediately giving chase, but an obstinate easterly wind held him to the Azores. A fortnight later the 'Fairfax' and a small frigate found him still windbound. Nor was it till the first week in February that he was able to stand over for the Portuguese coast. Not having been able to reach Vigo by the appointed time, he had not received any further instructions, but he expected to get them from Hall's division, which was now due to join. As he approached the coast he spoke a Dutch convoy homeward bound from Cadiz, and then, to his great surprise, he learnt for the first time that neither Blake nor any of his fleet were on the station. He was believed to have gone home, leaving four of his fleet to watch the Tagus.

Meanwhile, as we know, Blake had reached England to report his success. But even before his arrival the

[1] Popham and Deane to Penn, November 10, 1650; *Welbeck MSS.* ii. 70. In the same volume is a rough extract of his journal, which, with the fuller extracts in Penn's *Life of Penn*, i. 317 *et seq.*, is the chief authority for his long cruise.

Government had learnt that the Princes had been wintering in Toulon under French protection. Upon this, Blake's brother Benjamin was hurried out in the 'Assurance,' in company with Captain Ball in the 'Adventure,' to reinforce Penn and to order him to immediately carry his squadron into the Straits and deal with Rupert. These urgent instructions the two frigate captains left at the appointed rendezvous at Vigo, and, not finding Penn there, they passed down the coast and cruised in company before Lisbon.[1] Here Penn arrived in search of Robert Blake and his fleet on February 21, and spoke the 'Assurance,' but Benjamin Blake did not know or did not choose to tell the purport of the orders he had brought out, and Penn had to send back to Vigo to fetch them. Two days later he fell in with the 'Adventure,' and from Captain Ball he learned for the first time that he was not to supersede Blake, but to act under his orders ('for which,' he said handsomely, 'I am not sorry'). Subject to Blake's orders, however, he was given liberty to cruise as far as Gibraltar and Malaga.

It was evident that these instructions must have been penned before it was known that Blake was returning home. They clearly contemplated the two admirals acting in concert, which was now impossible. Penn was consequently in doubt, under the changed conditions, whether he ought to enter the Straits or to take Blake's place on the Portuguese coast. His desire was certainly to remain where he was; but on the morrow Hall appeared with his division in charge of the Levant convoy, and the instructions he brought made it clear to Penn that while Hall went up the Straits with the convoy, he himself was also to enter the Mediterranean in search of Rupert. He could no longer doubt that this was the effect of the orders that had been left at Vigo, and after a short

[1] Richard Gibson, in his 'Reminiscences' (Gardiner, *Dutch War*, p. 17), says he was cruising four months in Benjamin Blake's ship before Penn appeared. This would make him sail from England in September 1650, but we know the order to commission the two frigates was not issued till November 15 (*Dom. Cal. Commonwealth*, ii. 500). The two frigates probably sailed in December, so as to reach Vigo at the end of the month, when Penn was expected to be there.

consultation he decided to uncover Lisbon, and go down to Cadiz to revictual and clean for the chase.

Thus reluctantly he had forced upon him the honour of conducting the first true Mediterranean squadron. His disapproval of the move he could not conceal, but whether his objections were purely strategical may be doubted. As a sailor admiral his mind worked still in the old grooves which Drake at his best had vainly tried to break up. He was wedded to the false but profitable game of commerce destruction, and he did not scruple to say so. True, in acknowledging his orders he based his objections on the fact that Lisbon was almost reduced to famine by the blockade, and practically at his mercy; but it was on prizes that his mind was harping. 'Already,' he lamented, 'we have seized more vessels than we have been days before it, and I am confident that in one month we should have taken as many as we could well have manned.' Smarting under the disappointment of having so narrowly missed the Brazil fleet, he seemed incapable of appreciating the wider strategy of the Council of State or to see there was higher game stirring. Still, orders had to be obeyed, and for Penn it must at least be said that he obeyed them loyally.

By March 1 he was in Cadiz, busy refitting his fleet. Hall had also put in there with his convoy, and before such a display of force the Spaniards were more than ever polite. 'Your fleets meeting here,' wrote Hall in his despatch, 'so soon after the departure of the other [that is, Blake's] is of no less admiration to other foreign kingdoms (into which reports fly to them daily) than to Spain, who much admire your quickness in such strength and fresh supplies. So as I believe in a short time the Spaniards, between fear and love, will grow respectful to us, though hitherto we have had little sign of it, more than compliments which we fail not to equalise them in.'[1]

On March 13 Hall passed on his way up the Straits with his convoy, but it was not till the end of the month that Penn had his whole squadron ready, and on the 29th he entered the Mediterranean with eight sail, 'intending,'

[1] Penn, i. 325–330.

as he wrote, '(with God's assistance) to find Prince Rupert out, and endeavour the destroying of him and his adherents.'

In Toulon the Princes had succeeded in refitting the 'Reformation' and 'Swallow' and two other vessels, and in persuading another English captain to join their flag. Mazarin had found it necessary to go back from Richelieu's policy, and the exigencies of his struggle with the great feudal families had forced him to conciliate one of them by granting the office of Grand Master of Navigation to the Duc de Vendôme. To him Rupert applied for assistance and received permission freely to use the port and its stores in return for the money realised by the sale of his prizes. This permission, however, was accompanied by a curious change in Rupert's line of action which is highly significant. 'His Highness,' says his chronicler, after relating what had passed at Toulon, 'seeing himself reduced to three sail, strained the utmost of his treasure and bought another, which was named the "Honest Seaman," and being but weak in ships endeavoured to be strong in men. Before his levy was perfect an English gentleman called Captain Craven, who had a ship at Marseilles, took commission under his Highness, and joined with the fleet, which, being at anchor with the rest of his fleet, was named the "Loyal Subject." Thus, with a squadron of five ships, conceiving all disasters past, he fixed his resolution to take revenge on the Spaniard.'[1]

Of this determination no explanation is given. Instead of continuing to strike directly at English commerce, he had apparently resolved to deal with the Spaniards for giving the regicides liberty of their ports, as Blake had dealt with the Portuguese for receiving the cavalier fleet. The seamen seem to have been clearly under the impression that they were to wage war on Spain, and this is perhaps why he succeeded in filling up his crews so well. British sailors were always poor politicians. They did not like fighting their own countrymen, whatever the cause, but were always ready enough to fight Spaniards, especially as that way plunder was the easiest come by.

[1] Warburton, iii. 323.

Rupert's aim, however, did not end there. It was far more ambitious. He had secretly made up his mind that, after obtaining all he could on the Spanish coast, he would go out to the West Indies. There he intended to support the British colonies that still recognised the King, and so rekindle the war from that distant base. But so soon as he opened his mind to his companies he found them strongly opposed to any such course, and bent on remaining in Spanish waters. It is clear, then, that the declared objective of the little squadron when it sailed was Spanish commerce, and it is quite possible that it was on this understanding that Rupert received permission to use the Toulon dockyard. Mazarin, since the battle of Dunbar, had nearly lost hope of the royal cause, and though he could not bring himself to adopt the advice of his agent in England and recognise the Commonwealth, he was doing his best to stop the disastrous reprisals in which the two countries were engaged at sea. The sailing of Penn's fleet can only have increased his anxiety to come to terms. It was followed by the alarming news that Philip had forestalled him in recognising the Commonwealth, and he was warned by his agents that England was on the brink of entering into an offensive alliance with Spain. At the same time he was still losing ground to the Spaniards in the Mediterranean, and nothing seems more likely than that the condition of the assistance that was given to Rupert was that he was to use his force in weakening Spain, and not in giving further provocation to the Commonwealth.

Whether or not some such condition had been exacted from Rupert, it is clear he had little intention of abiding by it. When he sailed in the spring he steered to the eastward, giving out that his destination was the Levant. This was all the information of his movements that Penn was able to pick up when, after failing to find him among the Balearic islands and capturing a few French prizes, he too proceeded to the eastward. On May 1 he had heard from the Governor of Minorca that Rupert had been ready for sea some three weeks past. He therefore made for Sardinia as the best chance of getting in contact with

him, and of falling in with the French privateers who had taken to lying there for the English Levant traders. At Cagliari there was still no news of the chase, and all he could learn was that the King of France had engaged to lend the Princes three ships. For ten days he cruised between Sardinia and the Barbary coast, till, having assured himself his enemy had not passed eastward, he resolved to bear up along the east side of Sardinia and Corsica and lie off Toulon. In this way he made sure he would lay hold of some French man-of-war and get more certain information of Rupert's course. Subsequently he decided to put into Leghorn on his way, in order to communicate with the British Consul there, and the very day he arrived, May 25, a galley came in from Toulon bringing the Consul letters to the effect that Rupert with his five vessels and a fire-ship had sailed on the 7th, the same day that Penn had reached Sardinia.

So soon therefore as he had watered and sent off his despatches to the Council of State, he ran back southward, and after setting apart a Friday 'to seek the Lord in public,' he took up his station off Trapani at the western end of Sicily. There for a whole month he cruised in the narrows of the Mediterranean between Bizerta, Malta, and the Sicilian coast. Several valuable prizes were his reward, the richest of which, a 200-ton ship of 18 guns from Marseilles, full of treasure, he captured in a calm. The way in which it was done deserves recording as a testimony to the versatility of Penn and his officers. There being no wind to overhaul the chase, three of the frigates were fitted with oar-ports between the guns, and thus temporarily turned into vessels of free movement. In this way he was able, with the help of the boats towing, to overhaul and capture his prize. This feat was all the more satisfactory, for it was afterwards found that in a good breeze she could outsail any of the English vessels by a main-top sail.[1] But of the Princes he could hear nothing. Nor was it till the end of July that he knew his prayers and his activity had been alike unavailing. Putting into Messina, he found letters awaiting him from

[1] Penn, *Life of Penn*, ii. App. M.

the Consul at Leghorn, saying that the Princes had been seen off Cadiz. The fact was, Rupert's easterly course had been a mere ruse, but it had succeeded in outwitting Penn. Rupert had never passed to the eastward of Corsica at all, but had run directly down to the African coast just when the false intelligence he had spread had made Penn move to Sardinia out of his way. Stealing westward along the Barbary shore, while Penn was running north to Leghorn and Hall was far up to the eastward, he had quietly cleared the Straits without hindrance. Then, after trying in vain to light on a Spanish prize on the Andalusian coast, he had held off to Madeira out of harm's way.

Thus, though Penn's chase had failed in its main object, he had successfully covered the Levant trade and had driven Rupert out of the Mediterranean. It was all that was needed. Out on the ocean it was impossible for such a squadron as Rupert's to live long. By shipwreck, disease, and disaffection his force began inevitably to melt away, and though he did eventually reach the West Indies he was never again a real danger. The whole episode, in fact, was a kind of foretaste of Nelson's duel with Villeneuve, and Rupert's move to the West Indies proved as disastrous to the Royalist cause at sea as did Villeneuve's to that of Napoleon. Unlike Nelson, Penn did not take the strong step of leaving his station in pursuit, but like him he moved to the Straits. On his way he fell in with part of the Dutch Mediterranean squadron and received from the officer in command the deliberately false information that on June 30 he had seen Rupert's squadron off the Lizard heading up Channel. The news was not credited, and as there were rumours that the French Newfoundland fish fleet was coming into the Mediterranean, Penn decided to hold the Straits to waylay it. A fortnight later he received news of the 'crowning mercy' at Worcester by which Cromwell had given the death-blow to the Royalist cause. Rupert was therefore less than ever a danger, but at home the Princes were still believed to be on the Spanish coast, and with the good news Penn received orders from the Council of State that he was to devote himself to their destruction. A few days later

he obtained information that they were at the Azores, but still he clung to Gibraltar, being sure they must sooner or later make their way back. Moreover, by holding the Straits he had the best chance of making prizes. Throughout the whole campaign this idea of the object of naval warfare had never ceased to confuse his judgment. But in view of the intelligence he had of the unseaworthiness of Rupert's best ships and of the fact that a squadron under Ayscue had been ordered to the West Indies, it is difficult to say his decision was not right. He must at least be credited with the tenacity of the convictions which fastened him to the station he had chosen all through the winter, and the skill with which he disposed his squadron, both night and day, so that, as his son wrote, 'few ships went into the Straits but they were spoken with if friends, or taken if enemies.' [1]

At the end of November intelligence reached him that the 'Reformation,' the best of Rupert's ships, had been lost at the Azores with all hands. Thereupon, feeling justified at last in dividing his force, he resolved in council of war to detach three frigates westward to complete the Princes' destruction. With the rest of his force it was decided he should remain on guard where he was, and there he remained till the end of January 1652, when Badiley, in charge of the Levant convoy, arrived with a fresh squadron to relieve him. So the memorable cruise of the first true Mediterranean squadron came to an end, and early in February Penn cleared from Cadiz, homeward bound, having faithfully guarded the Levant trade, and with thirty-six prizes to his credit.

[1] Penn, ii. App. M.

CHAPTER XV

THE DUTCH WAR WITHIN THE STRAITS

MEANWHILE the Mediterranean policy of the two northern republics had been developing. The foregoing narrative will show that, although Hall's division had been definitely sent to protect commerce in the Mediterranean, Penn's presence there was to some extent an accident. When he sailed he had no orders for entering the Straits, and it was not till off Lisbon he met his fresh instructions to 'enlarge his quarters,' as he said, in consequence of Rupert's movements, that he thought of quitting the Atlantic. Since that time events had occurred which deeply emphasised the expediency of maintaining a permanent Mediterranean fleet. The heartburnings which for years had been accumulating between the English and the Dutch at sea were now increasing in intensity. In the course of their reprisals on the French the English officers exerted the undoubted right—as international law then was—to search Dutch vessels for French goods. This claim the Dutch, whose most profitable trade had always been in troubled waters, persistently refused to admit, and while Penn was lying in the Straits on the look-out for the French Newfoundland fleet, in which were many Dutch vessels, it almost came to blows. The Dutch southern squadron was about the Straits under Van Galen, one of the toughest and most strong-handed officers in the States' service—a veteran who had spent a strenuous lifetime in fighting Spaniards and corsairs. He had his ships dispersed for cruising, and one of them under Cornelis Tromp, son of the great admiral, fell in with Penn. Tromp at once divined what the English game was, and promptly passed the word for a concen-

tration. The intention certainly was to force Penn to leave the Newfoundland fleet alone, and it was only by the British admiral's tact and diplomacy that a serious conflict was avoided.

That the Dutch were able to take this high line was due to a recent and unprecedented development in their naval policy. When in 1648 the Peace of Westphalia brought the Thirty Years' War to a conclusion, their fleet was not reduced as usual to a bare peace footing. Owing to their strained relations with the Commonwealth and the increasing display of English power in the Mediterranean, more serious precautions were thought necessary. It had been resolved therefore that the admiralties of the various provinces should keep at sea a permanent force of forty sail for the protection of Dutch commerce. But, as the tension increased, even this was not considered sufficient. In the spring of 1651, after Penn and Hall had begun their operations, it was decided to practically double the existing establishment. On May 16 the States General called upon the various admiralties to furnish their respective quotas of an additional force of thirty-five sail, and a complete system of commerce protection was laid down. Five ships and fifteen frigates were to cruise from the Skager Rack to Gibraltar, covering the whole North Sea and Atlantic coasts; and the rest, being twelve ships and three frigates, or half the effective force of the new fleet, were to serve in the Mediterranean.[1]

The English Government replied with a corresponding addition to their own convoy squadrons. Hall had come home, but he had been replaced by another frigate squadron under a certain Captain Henry Appleton with Badiley for his second in command, and acting in two divisions they had been constantly employed throughout the year in convoying merchantmen from place to place over the whole extent of the Mediterranean. To this force at the end of the year was added the last new ship of the Commonwealth, which, as a symbol of their increasing power, had been named the 'Worcester,' after their late

[1] *Dutch War*, i. 57; ii. 22, 25.

triumph. With a small frigate as a tender she was ordered, under Captain Charles Thorowgood, on convoy duty, and to the particular service of redeeming slaves at Algiers. Not content even with this provision the Navy Committee reported that twenty-six more vessels should be brought forward for commerce protection, which would bring up the total to the number of those specially voted by the Dutch. On this report Parliament voted on January 14, 1652, that a permanent squadron not exceeding twelve sail was to be kept continually in the Mediterranean, and a system of reliefs arranged so that every quarter three or four ships should be sent home with convoys and be replaced by a similar number of fresh ones taking out outward-bound vessels. For this purpose the navy officers were authorised to commission thirty-eight sail. The English Mediterranean squadron would thus be in a numerical inferiority of three to the Dutch, whose squadron was to be fifteen; but it may be presumed that the English Government, owing to the general superiority of their ships, regarded these twelve as equal in force to the Dutch fifteen.[1] With regard to the rest of the Dutch permanent fleet, they were of course more or less balanced by the powerful Summer and Winter Guards that were always kept in the Narrow Seas, and charged with the ordinary convoy service of the Bay of Biscay and the North Sea and Baltic ports.

The English position had been further secured by the reduction of the Scilly Islands. There Sir John Grenville, grandson of the famous Sir Richard of the 'Revenge,' had managed to maintain himself under the Stuart flag. But the place had sunk into a mere nest of pirates, and in the spring of 1651 the Dutch, who had suffered as much as any one else, threatened to seize it. Tromp actually declared war on Grenville; but Blake was hurried to the scene with Ayscue's squadron, which was on the point of sailing for the West Indies, and quickly forced Grenville to surrender. Before the year was out the Isle of Man, Jersey, and Guernsey had shared the fate of Scilly. Thus at a stroke the Dutch were deprived of

[1] *Dutch War* (*Navy Records Society*), i. 61 *et seq.*

any hope they entertained of establishing a naval station in English waters, and the last blow was given to the Stuart sea power which at one time had threatened so seriously the very existence of the Commonwealth.

Another change must be noted. In August, while the resources and energy of the Commonwealth were strained to the utmost to meet the new danger caused by Charles II.'s reception in Scotland, Popham, who with the Channel Guard was watching to prevent any communication between the continent and the King at Stirling, suddenly died. In spite of the anxiety of the time, his body was brought up from Dover and buried at Westminster with all the pomp and solemnity of which the Republic was capable. Blake, to give him comparative rest after all his exertions, had been sent to Plymouth to watch the West. Deane was tied to Cromwell's army, preparing the flotilla for the masterly turning movement across the Forth which finally forced Charles from his impregnable position at Stirling. So Blake had to be hastily summoned from his rest and sent to sea again with the Channel Guard. Thus to all intents, on the eve of the great struggle with the Dutch, he became virtually sole naval Commander-in-Chief.

This then was the situation when, in the first days of February 1652, news reached Holland that Ayscue had seized in the West Indies the whole of the Dutch ships to the number of twenty-seven which he had found there trading in contravention of the English Act of October 3, 1650, forbidding commerce with the Royalist colonies. The Dutch merchants, seeing their West Indian trade threatened with destruction, petitioned that Vice-Admiral Jan Evertsen, who commanded the Northern division of the permanent squadron cruising from the North Sea down to Finisterre, should be reinforced and the Mediterranean squadron ordered to join him. He would then be able to intercept Ayscue's home-coming fleet and protect the outgoing West Indian merchantmen. About a fortnight later, on February 22, the States General issued the heroic order that the admiralties were to equip and arm no fewer than one hundred and fifty ships over

and above those already at sea in order to protect their commerce. Fifty of these were to be got to sea immediately, and the rest as soon as might be. It was not in the nature of the Commonwealth to let their enemies arm in peace. Three days later they confirmed Blake as sole Commander-in-Chief for a period of nine months. The Council of State duly made out his commission, deciding at the same time to defer the consideration of a person to fill Popham's vacant place, and immediately sent him down to Deptford, Woolwich, and Chatham to find out why the Summer Guard was not yet ready for sea. Reprimands went singing into every one's ears; the 'Sovereign of the Seas' (cut down a deck) and the 'Prince' (renamed the 'Resolution'), the two glories of the Caroline navy, were ordered into commission; the whole country was ransacked for guns; and Penn, who was just arriving from the Mediterranean with his four best ships, was ordered to keep them still at sea, and was subsequently selected by Blake for his vice-admiral. In April both Blake and Tromp were out, and on May 19 occurred the memorable conflict between them over the honour of the flag. Parliament immediately ordered forty more ships to be manned and armed, and began still more drastic reprisals on Dutch commerce. The bitter rivalry between the seamen of the two countries, which had been growing in acrimony ever since the English enabled the Dutch to become a sea power, had come to a head at last. All negotiations were in vain, and on the last day of June the Dutch envoys took their leave of Parliament, and the first of the great Dutch wars had begun.

Thus at its outset the growth of the English power in the Mediterranean received a check. The system of reliefs which had recently been established was thrown out of gear, and Appleton and Badiley, who were in command of the two divisions of the Mediterranean squadron under the new organisation, were left to shift for themselves. Not that the English Government at first had any idea of abandoning the position they had taken up. The total number of ships voted for the year 1652 was two hundred and fifty besides fire-ships. From this great fleet three

squadrons were to be detached for particular service in protecting commerce. A squadron of twenty sail was to proceed to the North; another, of thirty sail, was to guard the mouth of the Channel; while a third, also of thirty sail, was to go down to the Straits.[1]

For the men to whose arduous lot it fell to keep the English flag flying in the Mediterranean the situation happened at the moment to be singularly unfavourable. The squadron was not only particularly weak, but was very unfortunately disposed. Appleton, who had been busy during the winter and spring convoying merchantmen all over the Levant, was in Leghorn with the 'Leopard' (48) and the 'Bonaventure' (44). The 'Constant Warwick' (32), the third vessel of his division, was in Genoa. Leghorn, the Grand Duke of Tuscany's principal port, had become the chief trading centre of those seas, and here the Commonwealth had practically established the headquarters of the Mediterranean squadron by appointing a navy agent. The man chosen was Charles Longland, a merchant who had displayed much resource and activity in supplying Penn with stores and intelligence during his late cruise against Rupert. It is a name that deserves remembrance. He was a man of the type to which England has owed so much. A mere successful Italian merchant, suddenly called to State affairs, he immediately developed a courageous energy and diplomatic ability that were equalled only by the remarkable intuition for the broad conditions of naval power which his despatches exhibit. Appointed in November 1651, when the Commonwealth had determined on a continuous Mediterranean policy, he had already succeeded in obtaining from the Grand Duke extraterritorial rights in his port for English navy ships—a privilege which practically amounted to the recognition of the Commonwealth. He also secured their free access to the port for carcening and supply, and thus provided the squadron with a base.[2]

[1] Penn's *Life of Penn*, i. 430.

[2] Longland to Navy Committee and enclosures, April 19, 1652 (*Domestic Calendar*, p. 221). The Calendar contains the series of despatches from Longland and the naval officers on which the following narrative is mainly

Badiley had already been able to use it. In March he had entered the Straits with the 'Paragon' (52), the 'Phœnix' and 'Elizabeth' (two 36-gun frigates), and a smaller one, the 'Nightingale' (24). Passing up the Spanish coast, he had driven the French war-ships before him into Toulon and taken his convoy safely to Genoa and Leghorn. Then, in the usual course, he had passed on to the far Levant and was now at Smyrna, about to sail on his return voyage. Thus it happened that at the critical moment the two English squadrons were as widely divided as they could well be.

To make matters worse, the Dutch were unusually concentrated. Their admiral Katz had assembled a force of fourteen sail, and was engaged in making a demonstration before Toulon. Its object is difficult to determine. Toulon for some time past had been in a disaffected condition; but, though Marseilles had thrown in her lot with the Fronde, the naval port was still nominally loyal, and Frenchmen on the Italian exchanges gave out that Katz was come to secure it effectively in the interests of the French King. The suspicion that Mazarin's hand was in it was plausible enough. At the moment his chief need was for naval assistance. During the years when he had been powerful at sea, he had wrested from Spain her chief Flemish ports, Gravelines, Mardyke, and finally Dunkirk. But now the tables were turned. Gravelines was already recovered. Dunkirk was closely besieged by a Spanish army, and the Duc de Vendôme, the new 'Grand Master,' was straining every nerve to carry relief to it from Brest. Barcelona, which was still in French hands, was in much the same case, and Mazarin was trying to get a squadron equipped in the Mediterranean to reinforce Vendôme at Brest and to relieve Barcelona on the way.

This service was committed to a certain Chevalier de la Ferrière, an officer of the port of Toulon, who in 1649

based. But it must be noted that Longland's are wrongly placed. On comparing his despatches with Appleton's and Badiley's, it is clear Longland, in the Italian manner, used new style dates, and they therefore must be taken to have been written ten days earlier than appears in the Calendar.

had used the force then at his command to seize and destroy the London Levant Company's fleet, and was regarded by English merchants as the arch-thief of the Mediterranean. Longland had been urging the Council of State to send a squadron to reinforce their strength within the Straits, and suggested that it might begin operations by destroying La Ferrière's fleet on its way to Barcelona in retribution for his depredations on English commerce. English naval officers, as we know, had already extended their reprisals against ships belonging to the French Crown, and, in view of the critical condition of his affairs, Mazarin may well have welcomed any counterbalancing factor which might hamper English action on the Provençal coast. Nothing came of Longland's bold idea; but, in view of what afterwards occurred, it is important to bear in mind that this method of bringing the French to reason by a stunning blow had been suggested to the Council of State from the Mediterranean as early as the spring of 1652.[1]

There was, however, another explanation of the Toulon demonstration very different from that given by the French. Dutchmen affirmed that Katz was there to demand redress. There can be no doubt the Dutch had suffered as much from the seizure of Spanish goods in their vessels by the French as they had done from the seizure of French and Portuguese goods by the English, and the Dutch merchants in Italy gave out that, in default of justice being done, their admiral had commission for reprisals on French ships. But, as week after week went by and nothing definite was done, Longland came to the shrewd conclusion that Katz's action would depend on the result of the negotiations which were then in progress between London and the Hague. Almost from the first he smelt mischief, and he had never ceased to urge upon the home Government the need of reinforcing their Mediterranean squadron. As news of the strained relations with the Dutch reached him, his anxiety increased, and he decided with Appleton that he had better not put to sea till Badiley rejoined. On June 18 he heard of Blake's collision

[1] See *post*, p. 222.

with Tromp, just a month after it occurred, and immediately sent off to warn Badiley at Smyrna of the coming storm. Ten days later it burst. On that day Katz, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral of Holland, appeared with his whole squadron before Leghorn, and Appleton and his rich convoy were caught. In serious alarm he began unloading his more precious goods. Katz threatened to attack if he did not desist, but the Tuscan Governor held firm and Katz stayed his hand. As the Dutch were still vehemently striving in London to avert the war their lawlessness had brought upon them, it is probable that Katz had no definite orders to use violence, and moreover the redoubtable Van Galen was on his way out overland to supersede him. None knew the ground better than he, and it was not a year since he had crowned his reputation by forcing a treaty on Salee.[1]

Longland was at his wit's end. It was not only Van Galen, but serious reinforcements that the Dutch were expecting. He feared, too, the French might join them. As it was, even if Badiley succeeded in rejoining Appleton, the British force would be far too weak to do anything, and he redoubled his importunity for more ships. His efforts were supported by the powerful Levant Company at home. But the Admiralty was up to its eyes as it was. Blake, regardless of Tromp, had gone North with the main fleet to destroy the Dutch fishing flotilla, and not a ship could be spared. They suggested that the Levant Company should fit out war ships of their own under the letters of marque which had been already granted them after La Ferrière's destruction of their fleet. They replied they were too poor after all their losses from the French depredations in the Mediterranean, and, insisting on the new conception of commerce protection, suggested that the State should hire their ships that were out there, and fit them as men-of-war at the public expense. And this was all that could be done.

Meanwhile things at Leghorn remained at a deadlock. The Grand Duke would not allow the Dutch to attack, and Appleton could not stir. On August 22 Van Galen

[1] *Vie de Corneille Tromp*, 1694.

arrived; Badiley was also daily expected. It was well that the English had such a man to face the Dutch veteran. Like Longland, he was a man typical of his time. All through the days of his manhood, when Levant traders were expected to look after themselves, he had commanded a little ship called the 'Advance,' with a crew of only fifty-four hands, and three times at various points in the Mediterranean—once in 1637, once in 1640, and again in 1644—he had fought single-handed and heavily beaten powerful Barbary squadrons that had attacked him.[1] When the Parliament was setting out to establish its sea power he had been given the command of the 'Happy Entrance' after its return to its allegiance, and while commanding her had planned and carried through the destruction of the 'Antelope,' which Rupert had been forced to leave behind in Helvoetsluys. Since then, as we know, he had had further experience as Blake's rear-admiral on the coast of Portugal. Still, bold and resourceful as he was, he was no match for Van Galen in strategy or fleet tactics. All he could do, and well he did it, was to uphold the honour of his flag.

The moment Van Galen took over the command, all was astir. Leaving six vessels to watch Appleton in Leghorn, he himself immediately put to sea to intercept Badiley and prevent any co-operation with his colleague. For two days he kept in sight, and then disappeared to the west. Cox, who commanded the 'Constant Warwick' in Genoa, was promptly ordered to follow and ascertain his movements, with instruction that, if he found Van Galen making to the eastward, he was to go with all speed to Messina and on to Zante to meet Badiley. Whether Van Galen deceived Cox, or whether the latter was anxious to get away from Appleton's control, to Zante he went, and, the day after he had sailed, Van Galen reappeared before Leghorn.[2] Appleton was deeply aggrieved, but there can be no doubt that Cox's resolve to get to sea was for the best, though he certainly dis-

[1] See his Lieutenant John Steele's affidavit and Badiley's *Answer to Appleton's Remonstrance*, p. 90, *Brit. Mus.* E. 1952 (9).

[2] Appleton to Navy Committee, *S.P. Dom.* xxiv. 89, July 23, 1652.

obeyed orders. It was a serious misfortune that Appleton, besides being ill, was a thoroughly incompetent and unenterprising officer; he was now less inclined than ever to move; nor could Longland, having as yet no order to show, induce the captains of the Levant Company's ships to put their hand to the work. Thus Van Galen's dispositions were not so much as disturbed, and Badiley was left without assistance.

Cox met him at Zante, and informed him that he had left Van Galen steering westward. Badiley immediately resolved, instead of taking his convoy by way of Messina and Naples, the usual route by which Van Galen would expect him, to proceed direct to Leghorn. He had, even with the 'Constant Warwick,' but four men-of-war in company, besides the four Levant merchantmen of his convoy, against Van Galen's fourteen at the least. The odds were heavy against him, but he meant to try. English seamen proverbially underestimated the fighting powers of the Dutch, and if the merchantmen and Appleton only played their parts there was no reason why he should not cut his way through, in case, after all, he found Van Galen still off Leghorn. But from the intelligence which Cox had given him, Badiley was inclined to believe that Van Galen's design was to double back to the eastward, and lie in wait for him about the southern cape of Sardinia, and not near Leghorn. Thus, by following the course he had in his mind, and passing inside Sardinia and Corsica, he hoped to elude Van Galen altogether, and join hands with Appleton without interruption.[1]

Unfortunately, as we know, his intelligence was incorrect, and Van Galen continued to keep up the delusion. A week or so after he had reappeared at Leghorn he again put to sea with ten sail as though he were going to Toulon. Some said it was to fetch four fresh ships that had been equipped for him there; others that he was going to blockade the place, which was now in open revolt, while the King attacked it from the land side.[2]

[1] Badiley's despatch, Aug. 31, *S.P. Domestic*, xxiv. 125, i.
[2] Longland to Council of State, August 9–19, 1652, *ibid.* xxiv. 107.

Longland was not deceived, and, in despair of a junction being effected, was hoping as late as August 22 that Badiley was waiting at Messina till the fleet that was expected from England arrived. As a matter of fact Van Galen was still somewhere off Leghorn, and apparently fully aware of Badiley's movements. About the 26th he moved southward with his ten sail, leaving only four and an armed merchantman just joined to blockade Appleton, and it was at this time that Badiley was stealing up inside the islands. Next day, as he was passing Monte Christo, the two fleets sighted one another. About four o'clock they engaged, but a calm and nightfall put an end to the action before it had grown serious. 'There was not above four or five hundred pieces of ordnance spent on both sides,' wrote Badiley, 'and we had suffered but little.' Next morning Badiley was discovered to have been making his way towards Monte Christo, and three of the Dutch ships had fallen so far to leeward that Van Galen did not renew the attack till noon. The Dutch had apparently been reinforced by one ship from before Leghorn, and, so soon as their rearguard had closed up, Van Galen bore down with his whole weight.

Then all that long summer day raged a fight which each side agreed was the hottest within memory. To the Dutch Badiley appeared to have awaited their attack with his navy ships disposed in a half-moon, but he himself says that, according to the usual English practice, he had ordered his captains to fall astern of him and to engage at musket range. His order, however, was not properly obeyed even by the navy ships. Cox in the 'Constant Warwick'—an officer whose courage was as fierce and reckless as his temper—alone took and kept his station, and on him and Badiley fell the heat of the action. The Levant ships took hardly any part at all, but made their way safely and with all speed into Porto Longone in Elba, while Badiley held Van Galen. Owing to the failure of his captains to support him the Dutch were able to concentrate on the two leading ships, but all day long they held their own. 'By my gunner's account,' Badiley tells, 'we discharged from this ship eight hundred pieces

of great ordnance that day, which must have done no small execution, having sometimes two of the enemy's best men-of-war aboard; and their Admiral, Vice-Admiral, and Rear-Admiral, with all the rest, sometimes within pistol- and musket-shot of us.' Once he was boarded, and so hot was the reception that his adversary cried for quarter, but he was too hard pressed to take possession. Van Galen himself led the attack, but was soon forced to fall away with the loss of seventeen killed and twenty-seven dangerously wounded, and seven shot between wind and water. It was no wonder, for Badiley's method of fighting was severely English. Such was his fire discipline that he would not allow a single great gun to be discharged till he rang 'his ship's great bell,' with the result that his shot never missed, we are told, but tore great holes in the Dutchmen's sides and wrought havoc on board with the splinters.[1] Two or three ships took Van Galen's place, and Badiley was as hard put to it as ever. The 'Phœnix,' instead of keeping her station astern, had forged ahead, and when she tried to go about to his relief managed, though she was one of the smartest and handiest frigates in the service, to fall foul of a heavy Dutch ship, and having no forecastle for her men to retire to, was immediately taken.[2] 'There must have been great carelessness,' wrote Badiley, 'to say the least.' But he was so badly shut in that he could not move to her rescue. As evening fell, two of the enemy had lost their mainmasts, they had nearly two hundred killed, and, as the English Admiral said, 'they seemed out of breath.' There was cause enough. Bart and Swart, the two captains who had grappled Badiley, besides another called Haen, were killed; Van Boer, the vice-admiral, who had got across his bows to rake him, had been very severely handled; and Cornelis Tromp, who had followed his old chief to the Mediterranean, had to abandon his ship next day. The Dutch themselves admit they were forced to let go, and thus

[1] Gibson's 'Reminiscences,' Gardiner's *First Dutch War*, i. 18. Gibson confirms Badiley's formation as being in line ahead by giving the order of the ships.

[2] See Captain Wadsworth's letter in Badiley's *Answer*, p. 90.

during the night, by the help of his oars and his boats, Badiley was able to follow his merchantmen.[1]

There was nothing else to do. The ammunition of all his captains was almost expended. In his own ship he had twenty-six killed and fifty-seven wounded, including all his chief officers. He had received in his hull some fifty shot, many of them between wind and water, and his rigging was cut to pieces. Yet he saved his ship and his convoy, and by daylight next morning all his squadron, except the 'Phœnix,' was in Porto Longone. The Dutch made a threat to follow, but a few shots from the Spanish batteries persuaded them to be content with the important victory they had won. Moreover, judging by the state of Badiley's shot lockers, their ammunition must have been no less exhausted, and, ill-manned as they were, their crews must have been decimated. Consequently no further attempt was made to molest the English vessels. At first Badiley did not realise the meaning of his defeat. He barely regarded it as such, and believed that, if the Spanish Governor of Porto Longone only held true to his neutrality, he could soon achieve some means of joining hands with Appleton.

Longland saw more clearly. He knew the man Appleton was, and knew how active Van Galen had been to increase his force by arming merchantmen. When it was known at Leghorn that Van Galen and Badiley were in contact, Longland had urged Appleton as strongly as he could to put out and fight the four ships that were blockading him. But, although the Dutch crews all told did not outnumber those of his two navy ships, and though two of his convoy offered to join him, he would not stir, because, as he said, he was ill, nor would he suffer his officers to go without him. Had he tried, a junction might almost certainly have been effected in Porto Longone. As it was, all Longland could do was to use his best diplomatic means to secure the neutrality of

[1] The details of the action are taken from Badiley's despatches in *S.P. Dom.* xxiv. 125, i., and from various letters and affidavits printed in Appleton's *Remonstrance*, and Badiley's *Answer*, and in *La Vie de Corneille Tromp.* Gibson also gives a picturesque account in his 'Reminiscences,' *ubi supra.*

Badiley's port of refuge. But that he knew was little enough. 'I hope,' he wrote to the Navy Committee, 'God has directed you to a better protection, without which this will soon vanish, for the enemy is master of the sea, by which way alone Captain Badiley's wants must be supplied. . . . Except this fleet of Dutch be destroyed there will be no trade for our nation in the Straits.'

As a matter of fact he need have been in no anxiety about Spanish neutrality; for already an event had happened which could only confirm Spain in her friendly attitude and by which France earned the reward of the piratical conduct of her officers in the Mediterranean. The naval situation at the moment was as follows. The bulk of the Spanish fleet under Don John of Austria was before Barcelona supporting the efforts of Philip's army to recover it from the French. The Chevalier de la Ferrière had got to sea with the Toulon squadron, but the force he had been able to raise was quite inadequate for the relief of Barcelona without the assistance of the Dutch; and, though there was no chance of this being given, they were being allowed in Provençal ports every facility for furthering their efforts to drive the English out of the Mediterranean. The bulk of the French naval force was with Vendôme on the Atlantic seaboard. Having completed the organisation of his fleet in Brest, he had swept southward and driven from before Rochelle a combined squadron of Spaniards and French Frondeurs who were there to give countenance to its rebellion; and having thus secured his rear he had gone northward to relieve Dunkirk. On September 1 the fleet was driven into Dieppe by a gale, and three days later Vendôme, who had gone ashore, was roused from his bed with a message from the besieged port that unless relieved in three days it must capitulate. His larger ships were still under refit and unable to move, but he promptly sent to sea the whole of his transports and store ships under escort of eight of his smaller men-of-war. Next day, as they were passing Calais, they sighted Blake's fleet, supposed to be on the look-out for Tromp; but to their

intense surprise he bore down on them, captured seven of the eight men-of-war and most of their convoy, and carried them to the English coast. Next day Dunkirk capitulated, and Spain had recovered all she had lost in the days when France had dominated the Mediterranean.

Blake's startling action had been suggested by the Spanish Ambassador. He had pointed out to the English Government the opportunity Vendôme's attempt would afford for pressing their reprisals upon the French King's own ships, since they too had been guilty of attacks upon English merchantmen within the Straits. To this day the French can only speak of it as a felony. But, by all the laws of war, a state of general reprisal existing, it was technically lawful, and in view of what was going on in the Mediterranean it is hard to deny its justice. For two years or more France had refused to recognise the Commonwealth, and had treated it as a pirate power, whose commerce was fair game for any one. She had sheltered Rupert and saved him. At this very hour she was further tearing her pretended neutrality by allowing Van Galen openly to use her Provençal ports as a base of attack against the Commonwealth officers. By what right or reason could she complain? The blow was hard, but she brought it on her own head. Nor did it end there. Vendôme's concentration at Brest, which Blake had robbed of its fruit, had left Don John supreme in the Mediterranean. La Ferrière could effect nothing, and a month later Barcelona had shared the fate of Dunkirk.[1]

[1] The Council of State expressly defended their attack on French navy ships on the ground that French navy ships had seized English merchantmen (Guizot, i. App. xx. 5, and Gardiner, *Commonwealth*, ii. 131). Dr. Gardiner at first was inclined to believe there was no evidence of this, but subsequently called attention to the complaint of the Levant Company in 1649 (*S.P. Dom.* p. 11) of injuries done them by the 'French Fleet within the Straits,' which he assumes must mean a fleet of the French royal navy. To this evidence we may add a despatch of Longland's of May 1–10, 1652, in which, in anticipation of Blake's action, he suggests attacking a fleet of French navy ships that 'are arming for the relief of Barcelona, and are commanded in chief by Captain Ferere' (i.e. La Ferrière), 'a famous thief that has done much mischief to our nation in burning the "Talent" and taking other ships, and now intends the like ruin to any of our ships' (*S.P. Dom.* xxiv. 11). La Ferrière, according to the editor of Mazarin's 'Letters,' is often mentioned in them 'comme chargé d'un com-

The blow brought Mazárin at last to his senses; but while he was hastening his preparations to get an embassy over to recognise the Commonwealth, the Spanish Ambassador was doing his best that open war should come of it. It was no wonder then that all went well in Porto Longone, and that Badiley remained on excellent terms with the Spanish Governor. Under his wing communication between Elba and Leghorn was easy enough by way of the Spanish ports on the Tuscan coast. Longland came round to consult with Badiley, and Cox went to Leghorn to take over the command of the 'Bonaventure,' whose captain had just died. But nothing could be got out of Appleton, who remained as inert as ever. Instead of improving, the situation grew worse and worse. The Dutch being in command of the

mandement maritime à Toulon' (*Lettres de Mazarin*, v. 52, *n.*). The 'Talent' and her cargo were valued at 60,260*l.*, and on proof thereof the Council of State authorised the Admiralty Judges to issue letters of marque and reprisal to that amount on January 9, 1650. On the same day similar letters were authorised to two other firms, members of the Levant Company, for 9,838*l.* and 32,762*l.* (*Dom. Cal.* 554). Following this on April 25, when Popham was about to sail to join Blake off Lisbon, he was invested with powers of letters of marque, and instructed to seize 'such ships and vessels of the French King or any of his subjects as you shall think fit' (Thurloe, *St. P.* i. 144). The Levant Company, it appears, did not act on their letters of marque. When they complained of the blockade of their ships at Leghorn, they were asked why they had not done so, and they replied that they could not afford it 'in respect of our late and many losses by the French fleet' (*Dom. Cal.* 360). In view of the repeated use of this expression, and the fact that the Levant Company's ships were more than a match for any ordinary privateers, the conclusion is almost irresistible, apart from the other evidence, that the damage had been done by the King's navy. But Colbert, in his minute on the subject drawn up in 1650, actually admits that this was so (Guizot, *Hist. de la Rép. Anglaise*, vol. i. App. xv.), and suggests two different grounds of excuse. The King's ships, he says, attacked English commerce, either when his officers were serving under a Stuart commission (and the King could not refuse his cousin leave to give such commissions); or else when serving under his own flag, but then only because the aggrieved merchantmen refused to submit to a search for Spanish goods. It is to be observed, however, that when Gentillot was sent over to negotiate an arrangement, although his instructions admit the attacks by French navy ships, they do not direct him to excuse them on the ground of resistance to 'the right of search.' This would look as though the facts would not bear out the defence Colbert had suggested (*ibid.* App. xvii. 455). It is noteworthy, moreover, that it was equally absent from Bordeaux's instructions and Louis XIV.'s letter of December 2, 1652 (*ibid.* 512–16).

sea were able continually to increase their force by taking up merchantmen, and by the middle of September they had twenty sail available. To add insult to injury, they had brought the captured 'Phœnix' into Leghorn, and were busy careening and refitting her, under Appleton's nose, as an addition to their fleet. Longland tried to persuade Appleton to seize her, but he objected that it would be a violation of the neutrality of the Grand Duke's port. Efforts were then made to follow the Dutch example and persuade the English merchant captains to prepare their vessels as men-of-war, but they still refused to take the responsibility unless he could show authority from the Government to take them up. So there was nothing to do but try to keep the Tuscan Government in a good temper till a relieving fleet arrived from England.

Owing to an epidemic at Genoa, communication with the North was very difficult, and it was not apparently till nearly six weeks after the action at Monte Christo that the Council of State heard of their Mediterranean officers' distress. They immediately ordered their thanks to be sent to Spain and to the Governor of Porto Longone, and Blake was directed to detach twenty ships from his fleet to rendezvous at Portsmouth and proceed to the Straits under the command of Captain Peacocke. Blake had just defeated De With and De Ruyter off the Kentish Knock, and it was believed the campaign was over for the year. So far the English had had almost uninterrupted success against the Dutch, and to all appearance a squadron for the Mediterranean might easily be spared. Blake by no means took this view, and kept urging the Government to keep him in fighting trim. So great, however, was their confidence and financial embarrassment that he pleaded in vain. The result was all that Blake feared. In a couple of months Tromp, who had been recalled to the command, was out again with the Bordeaux convoy, and finding Blake, as he passed down Channel, in greatly inferior strength, inflicted on him a sound defeat. Then at last the Government awoke to the gravity of the situation. Clearly every effort must be concentrated on regaining the command of the Channel, and Peacocke

was promptly ordered to rejoin Blake's flag with his twenty ships.

Meanwhile Badiley, in ignorance as yet that he had been abandoned, had not been idle. At the end of October he had received an order six weeks old, appointing him Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean, and he acted immediately. Having obtained permission from the friendly Governor to erect batteries ashore for the protection of his vessels, he made all snug, and then took a felucca to Leghorn. He had heard that the bulk of the Dutch fleet had sailed westward, leaving only six vessels to blockade the port, and he meant under his new authority to bring out the 'Leopard' and 'Bonaventure' at all costs. In the blockaded port he found all at a deadlock. The ships were not provisioned, and the officers were at loggerheads. Cox's temper could not brook Appleton's refusal to permit an attempt to recover the 'Phœnix,' and Appleton had dismissed him his ship. Longland was no less disgusted with the commodore's inertness, but Badiley soon made a change. Showing his new commission to Appleton, he restored Cox to his command, and ordered Longland to get two months' victuals into the navy ships; but before he was ready the Dutch had thirteen ships outside, and he could not move. So back again he went to Elba, convinced it was impossible for the two squadrons to effect a junction till help came from England, or at least until Longland had succeeded in a negotiation he had set on foot to get hold of some of the English private men-of-war that were in the Venetian service.

One step, however, he had taken before leaving Leghorn which was destined to have the gravest results. When he had first conceived the idea of cutting the 'Antelope' out of Helvoetsluys, the Earl of Warwick had assured him that no act of hostility would violate the neutrality of a foreign port provided no fire-arms were used to disturb it. There could, of course, be no higher authority on such a point than the Lord High Admiral of England, and Badiley, to whom the sight of the 'Phœnix' being refitted by his enemies was as tormenting as it was to Cox, had given his fiery captain leave to

surprise her if he could do so quietly. Moreover, as he assured the Council of State, quite in Nelson's vein, he was sure that when they gave him strict orders to respect the Grand Duke's port, they could not have contemplated that the smartest frigate in the service would ever be in Dutch hands. There were, of course, great difficulties in the way; but when one day Cornelis Tromp, who had been given command of the 'Phœnix,' put to sea and returned with a fat English prize and her national colours trailing under his stern, Cox could hold his hand no longer. It happened that the morrow was St. Andrew's day, when it was the custom for the Dutch skippers to give a feast to their Italian friends. The drinking was probably unusually deep over the new prizes, and in the dead of night Tromp suddenly found himself boarded on each side by three fisher boats. He had barely time to discharge his pistols and leap overboard out of his cabin window before Cox—for it was he—and the lieutenants of his own and Appleton's ships were in effective possession. The crew were forced below; the moorings were cut; and she was soon standing merrily out to sea through the midst of the blockading squadron. For two hours Dutch and English fought like fury between decks as she sped away from the two frigates that vainly gave chase; but at last all was quiet. Fresh and clean as she was, she easily outsailed her pursuers, and nothing more was heard of her till a message came from Cox to say he was safe in Naples.[1]

It was a smart and well-judged piece of work, with a smack of the practical joke which appealed to the Florentine sense of humour. At first the Grand Duke seemed unwilling to take the matter very seriously. The whole thing had been done beyond the range of his batteries, and by the English not a shot had been fired. 'It seems,' wrote Badiley, 'the Great Duke, upon first hearing what was done upon the "Phœnix" frigate, smiled and said the Turks had taken her out of the midst of the Dutch fleet, and not the English,' and his Highness was further pleased to

[1] Gibson, in his account of the exploit, says that Tromp shot Appleton's lieutenant dead as he was breaking open the cabin door, and that this was the only loss.

banter the indignant Dutchmen on the excellent watch they kept. Unfortunately Appleton in a moment of ill-timed energy spoiled the game. A Dutch spy had been discovered in one of the English ships and had leapt overboard to swim ashore. Appleton followed in a boat, and just as the man reached the shore he tried to arrest him. The sentry interfered and called the guard, and in the altercation that ensued Appleton so far forgot himself as to strike one of the musketeers. It was more than the Grand Duke could endure. He sent for Appleton and had him arrested at Pisa, but finally was induced to hand him over to Badiley, with whom the Duke was still on excellent terms, on condition that he would keep him under arrest. So the affair ended, but its ill-effects continued, and they were seriously increased when the news of Blake's defeat came in, and it was known that Badiley could no longer expect assistance from home. Moreover, Tromp, after his victory, had proceeded as far as the Isle of Rhé off Rochelle, and it was believed he meant to detach a squadron into the Straits. The Dutch force there had already grown to some thirty sail; there was a credible report that Prince Rupert was coming to command them; and it became clear to the Duke that, unless he got rid of his unwelcome guests, his port could not remain much longer inviolate.

Longland and Badiley redoubled their exertions to meet the expected crisis. Longland had secured six ships in Venice and hoped for two more. He had compelled the Levant Company's merchantmen in Leghorn and Genoa to discharge their cargoes and fit as men-of-war, and was begging the Council of State to send out to him men, even if they could not spare ships. Badiley had got the 'Constant Warwick' and the 'Elizabeth' out of Porto Longone, and they were with Cox at Naples ready to join hands with the Venice ships so soon as they came round. The rest of his convoy he had moved into Porto Ferrajo, the Tuscan port of Elba, where he was permitted to refit them as men-of-war. This change of base had been forced upon him by his hot-headed captains having

offended the Spaniards at Naples. They had taken a Dutch prize, and the Viceroy insisted on having the case brought into his own prize court. The captains refused, and were consequently arrested and thrown into prison, 'which,' wrote Longland in despair, 'brings disgrace and contempt upon the Parliament's commanders; and except the Parliament at home resent it in some high manner it will grow customary amongst the Italian Princes.' 'The necessity,' Longland added, setting his finger on the weak point of the whole situation, 'our ships are put to for these Princes' ports makes them trample upon us.'

Badiley had now twenty ships if he could only get them together, and twice he flew to Leghorn on hearing the Dutch had drawn off, but only to find them in force again off the port. They had been reinforced by three ships from Tromp's fleet and now numbered over thirty sail, six of which were lying somewhere off Brindisi to intercept the ships that were to come from Venice. Badiley's idea, since his captains at Naples had been set free on his demand, was to concentrate his own squadron at Porto Ferrajo, and endeavour, if it pleased God to open a way, to release the ships in Leghorn and then go to meet the Venice ships at Messina. He meant to do his best, but felt bitterly that he had been neglected. 'Some assistance,' he wrote to the Navy Committee, 'is most necessary, not only in respect of the honour of the nation . . . . at a place, which may be called the centre of trade and upon which is the eye of all Europe; but it is reported that Prince Rupert may be here every day with his prizes from the West Indies, and if he comes before our conjunction the disorders our mariners may be put to cannot be foreseen.' Such a warning must have sounded very much like a threat; but Badiley was true as steel, though he did not refrain from pointing out that in the early stages of the war, when General Blake and Sir George Ayscue's fleets met, they might have sent him aid and had his squadron back in time for the late battle.

It was in the last days of Febuary 1653, after endless heartburnings over Cox's exploit, that the end came, and

Badiley received an ultimatum from the Duke that he must either give up a ship as security for the restoration of the 'Phœnix' to the Dutch, or else clear his war ships out of Leghorn within ten days. It was a hard alternative, but Badiley did not flinch. Ill-manned and badly placed as he was, and smarting as he did at the way he had been abandoned, he could not bring himself to admit the unlawfulness of what he had done, or to lower the lofty tone he had taken over the honour of his flag. So, coolly and with a full appreciation of what it meant, he chose the harder way, and resolved to shake the dust of Leghorn from his feet. To this end he immediately repaired to his own squadron, which was now again concentrated at Porto Ferrajo, to mature his plans. He had there his flagship, the 'Paragon,' his three frigates, and four armed merchantmen, and in Leghorn were two frigates and also four merchantmen. The Dutch at the moment had but sixteen sail in their blockading squadron. 'It had been better,' wrote Longland, 'if they could have stayed for the conjunction of the Venice ships, but Providence has otherwise determined.' In any case the Venice ships had done their work by drawing off part of the blockading fleet. 'I hope,' he added, 'all will be for the best, as a better opportunity than this with less odds we may not meet with in six months. If God gives us the day, I hope Captain Badiley will so husband the business as to keep the mastery of the seas, which will be of very great import.'

There was indeed ground for hope. Even as the ultimatum was being penned, England was rejoicing over the victory which Blake, Deane, and Monk had won in the Channel over Tromp's fleet on its return from Rhé, and the Navy Committee was writing out to Longland and Badiley that the Lord had been pleased to open a door for their relief, and that all hands and heads were at work to that end. But of this they knew nothing, and had to play their own hand.

On the last day of February, Badiley put out from Porto Ferrajo, and from Piombino sent his last instructions to Appleton. For at Badiley's request the Grand

Duke had consented to his arrest being removed in order that he might take out the Leghorn squadron. Badiley's final idea provided for two alternative conditions of weather. If the wind were from the sea, and so in his favour, he intended to keep to windward of Van Galen, and, so soon as the wind came strong, to endeavour to break through his squadron and join hands with Appleton, who was to be ready outside the Mole to meet him. If on the other hand the wind were off shore, so as to give the Dutch the weather gage, and Van Galen stood off to attack the relieving squadron, then Appleton was at once to give chase. In this case it was, of course, of the utmost importance that Appleton should fall on Van Galen's rear at the earliest possible moment, and Badiley's last words to him were, 'Haste as for your life to follow with all sail you can, so that we be not too much oppressed before you come.' It was equally important that Appleton should on no account expose himself by putting to sea till Badiley and Van Galen were actually engaged. A council of war had been held at Leghorn, at which, in accordance with letters received from Badiley, this had been very strictly laid down as a condition essential to success. But it seems clear that the resolution was come to on the supposition that Van Galen would not stand off to fight the relieving squadron. Subsequently it must have occurred to Badiley that possibly he would, and it was evidently in view of this possibility that at the last moment he gave Appleton the additional instruction.[1] It does not appear to have struck Badiley that his last orders were not entirely on all fours with those he had already given, and that they left to Appleton the final decision as to what was the crucial moment for him to come out. Here was his mistake. Knowing the man Appleton was, it was vital he should leave nothing to his intelligence. In the event, however, of the wind being off shore, a most important decision was so left, and in the result we have one more example of the absolute necessity of the most exact and unmistakable instructions when a combined operation is to be attempted.

[1] Longland to Cromwell, *Dom. Cal.* Nov. 4–14, p. 243.

When Badiley appeared off Leghorn, the wind was blowing from the sea, and he had to content himself with keeping the wind of Van Galen. In the afternoon, however, it began to blow from the land, but still the Dutch did not stir. At nightfall, therefore, Badiley beat close in, and unperceived sent orders to Appleton to break out under cover of the darkness. It was a splendid chance, but at dawn Appleton was still motionless. Bitterly disappointed, Badiley stood to sea again to try to draw the Dutch into the open. The wind was still fresh from the east, and Van Galen, to Badiley's delight, weighed and gave chase. Thinking his moment had come, Appleton, in accordance with his instructions, made sail in his wake, and then happened the thing which—simple as it seems—was apparently beyond Badiley's tactical foresight. So soon as Appleton was well under way, Van Galen went about and stood back for the mouth of the port. The result was a premature action, in which the Dutch admiral was able to bring the whole weight of his sixteen vessels upon Appleton's six, and Badiley was left hopelessly to leeward, little more than a spectator of his colleague's destruction.

Considering how ill-manned were his ships and how demoralised his men by their long detention in port, Appleton seems to have made a fairly good fight of it. It was four hours before all his merchantmen had struck, and he himself, he says, held out for six. Only one ship, a merchantman, managed to get clear, and join Badiley to leeward. The losses on both sides were severe. Those admitted by the Dutch were 123 killed, and as many wounded. Among the latter was Van Galen himself. Early in the action he had been hit in the leg by a round shot. With some demur he was taken below and had it amputated just below the knee. Still he could not rest. So soon as the operation was over he called for a cup of wine, and, drinking confusion to all regicides, insisted on being carried on deck again to direct the remainder of the fight. It is with regret that one has to tell that nine days later he died of his wound, but with a reputation his countrymen fully and handsomely recog-

nised. We can do no less when we remember that the crown of his long and brilliant record was that, with resources at first scarcely superior to his determined enemy, he drove the English out of the Mediterranean.[1]

That, and no less, was the result of his clever victory. In the face of so complete a reverse there was nothing left for Badiley but to make good his escape before he himself was overwhelmed like his colleague, and by the end of March he was clear out of the Mediterranean, with all his squadron and convoy and a Dutch prize he took at Minorca. Not that he intended to abandon his station to the Dutch without a struggle. His own ship was too foul, shot-torn, and worm-eaten to keep the sea; but two of his frigates only required cleaning, and these he intended to send back from Lisbon, 'to amuse the Dutch,' as he said, and prevent their sending north any considerable portion of their ships to reinforce their main fleet. He himself proposed to go home, change his ship, and beg for ten fresh ones, and with this force added to his own he believed he could regain his position. His two frigates and the ships from Venice would have compelled the Dutch to split up their fleet for convoy duty, and he would be able to defeat them in detail.

It was a plausible scheme, but unfortunately his crews refused to listen to his orders. They were resolved to come home after their long spell of service. Badiley was powerless to oppose. He had to give up, and in May with the whole of his mutinous squadron he was back in the Downs.

At the Admiralty he found a new spirit in the ascendant. After Blake's defeat and his protest against the inadequate force with which he had been furnished, the Government had determined to fill up Popham's vacant place, and join Deane and the new man with Blake in the active command in accordance with the original scheme. The new man was General George Monk, whose recent brilliant and thorough work in the pacification of Scot-

[1] For further details of the action, see Mr. Spalding's exhaustive study of the whole episode in his monograph on *The Life and Times of Richard Badiley*.

land had justified Cromwell's high opinion of his abilities. The choice is highly significant, for it confirmed absolutely the military influence. Monk was the typical soldier of his time. Unlike Blake or Popham or Deane, he had been a soldier all his life. Born of a knightly and ancient family in Devonshire, war was bred in his bone. When still a boy he had served in Cecil's disastrous expedition to Cadiz, and again in Buckingham's fiasco at Rhé. Since then he had fought and studied under the Dutch flag in the Low Countries with ever increasing distinction till he became captain-lieutenant of the crack English regiment in the service, and so it was under his hard hand that all the most brilliant of the gilded youth of England were schooled into soldiership. At the outbreak of the domestic troubles in his own country, he had come home with an unrivalled reputation as an expert soldier. Deeply versed in the science of his profession, and with all the traditions of the art of war ingrained in him like a second nature, he brought to bear upon the problem of the hour a broad conception of the military exigencies of the case unclouded by political considerations and undisturbed by unessential details. His talent for warlike administration was no less pronounced. He had learned it in the finest school in Europe, and the directness and homely shrewdness of his methods carried all before him. Politically his simple creed was to be true to his commission and his paymasters. In the civil war he had had to choose between them. He chose his commission and served the King, and though he had been taken prisoner in his first action and lodged in the Tower, no pressure which the Parliament or his personal friends could bring to bear in order to secure his services could move him till the war was over. Then, in accordance with the code of the professional soldier, he considered himself free and frankly took service with the Commonwealth. Such was the man who from now onward was to dominate the navy for many a year to come.

His first taste of true naval warfare had been in the late victory over Tromp, where he had commanded the junior squadron. He was now with Deane in active

command of the main fleet, since Blake had been wounded and was still incapacitated. On the Mediterranean problem his influence is at once visible. After the victory, which had absorbed the original squadron destined for the Straits, a fresh one was quickly set on foot at Portsmouth. Deane and Monk did not approve. In what had happened in the Mediterranean they read before everything an emphatic warning of the importance of concentration, and told the Government so plainly. Though they were preparing the new squadron according to their orders, they doubted the wisdom of sending it, and even took upon themselves to suggest that the whole design should be reconsidered in view of the fact that Badiley was coming home. They were of opinion that the squadron could be employed to greater advantage by cruising in touch with themselves in the mouth of the Channel to intercept the Holland trade. There can be little doubt they were right. The pressing need of the moment, before any real use could be made of the Mediterranean, was to crush the Dutch sea power, and the way to do it was to concentrate every available ship upon their main fleet and the converging points of the commerce on which their national vitality depended. For a while, however, the Government insisted on their view; but after Cromwell's *coup d'état* on April 20, by which he practically became dictator, no more was heard of the new Straits squadron. It was finally absorbed in the great fleet with which, in the famous two days' battle off the North Foreland, Monk, deprived of his colleague at the outset by a round shot, but with Penn and Jordan for his flag officers, defeated Tromp, De Ruyter, and De With. The victory was far from deciding the war. The Dutch were soon ready for sea again, and, eluding the blockade which Monk had established, were able to concentrate in the North Sea a fleet more powerful than ever. The great four days' battle followed, in which Monk was again victorious, and Tromp lost his life. But even then, so desperate had been the fight, the English admiral was unable to establish a working command of the sea, and it was impossible to spare a squadron for the Mediterranean.

There the Dutch had to be left in undisputed control, and the war dragged on till Cromwell became Protector and, much to Monk's disgust, put an end to it in the spring of 1654. The Dutch sea power was not entirely crushed. The general conditions rendered such an end impolitic. So peace was made on terms which, without destroying Holland as a potent Protestant power, insured to England a real maritime supremacy—a supremacy which, among all its other advantages, left her free to pursue her interrupted policy within the Straits.

CHAPTER XVI

CROMWELL AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

WITH the close of the Dutch war the Protector in undisputed sway found himself with the destinies of England in his lap and his hands free to shape a foreign policy. Having firmly established the new Government at home, his remaining task was to make it respected abroad, and force the powers to abandon the Stuarts. The policy he pursued to this end is one of the knottiest points in English history. It has baffled the greatest historians, as it baffled the most astute of his contemporaries, to unravel completely its shifting intricacies, to reconcile its apparently changing aims. For our present purpose, however, it is unnecessary to push inquiry very far. For the student of English action in the Mediterranean it is in this very uncertainty that its main interest lies. It was in the Mediterranean that he found the chief means of executing his bewildering changes of front, and whichever way he faced for the moment he had always there a point in his position which seemed to outflank and dominate any force his opponents could bring into line against him.

When the Protector looked abroad, the chief factor in the European situation was the struggle between France and Spain, which was the last relic of the Thirty Years' War, and which still continued to fill Europe from end to end with unrest. So deep and widespread were the interests involved that every state had to shape its policy more or less closely in relation to the great centre of disturbance, and there was not one that did not see its future for good or evil to some extent bound up in the outcome of those interminable campaigns. From year

to year the advantage shifted, and no one could foresee the end. This alone was clear, that, if any power should arise to sway the balance definitely to the one side or the other, it would be acclaimed as the controlling force in Europe.

It is then no matter for wonder if Cromwell's instinct quickly assured him that in intervention in that great struggle his foreign policy must speak. Three leading ideas are clearly recognisable in the maze in which he seemed to move. They answered exactly to the three leading motives which had actuated English foreign policy ever since she had become a great power. First there was the religious idea—that his mission was to become the leader of a great Protestant coalition, and finally stay and stifle the counter-reformation. It was of this too that James had dreamed in his feckless way when he first sent a fleet into the Mediterranean. This idea in its integrity would of course involve not mere intervention, but war with both the exhausted combatants. Secondly, there was the commercial idea, which meant a revival of the Elizabethan war, having for its aim the opening of the New World to British trade and the withdrawal of British subjects from the jurisdiction of the Inquisition in Spanish ports. The adoption of this idea involved war with Spain and an alliance with France. Finally there was the national idea—the determination to lift England once more into the position from which she had fallen, and to take vengeance for the insult and contumely which had been heaped upon her ever since she had been a republic. France in this had been the arch-offender by her piratical treatment of English commerce and her protection of the Royalist cause. It was a view consequently that seemed to point to an alliance with Spain.

The position was one which the two belligerents were quick to realise. Both France and Spain saw clearly that the controlling force had arisen, and each was bidding higher and higher for its good will. In the Spanish Netherlands the Archduke, in appealing to his subjects to raise the money which Cromwell was de-

manding as part of the price of his alliance, put it frankly enough. 'At last,' he proclaimed, 'God, who is accustomed to act by ways inscrutable to men, has raised up a human power that can make the scales incline to the side of peace by putting a finger ever so lightly upon them.'[1] As far as human eyes could see, it was no less than this that was at stake: whichever belligerent could secure the English alliance would be in a position to dictate terms to the other.

With the game thus completely in his hand it was natural that Cromwell should be in no hurry to decide which card to play, until he saw clearly which line would best achieve his several aims. Moreover, a fresh Royalist rising in the Highlands gave a further cause for deliberation. So for the time the diplomatists held the field and Cromwell spread around him a web of negotiation which for intricacy and instability neither Elizabeth nor James ever surpassed. Still diplomacy without some hint of action would not avail. It was this that had brought James's well-meant efforts into contempt, and Cromwell was no man to fall into the same error. Yet, if action must be taken, it must be action that threatened both France and Spain alike. The solution was simple and ready to hand. It was clearly a situation that lent itself to the Mediterranean treatment, and Cromwell's first step was to set about preparing a fleet for the Straits.

The importance which he attached to the move is testified by the fact that Blake was selected for the command. The cruise that followed is one of the most famous in English naval history. Regardless of all that led up to it, many have even come to acclaim it as the beginning of the English action within the Straits. Legends grew up about it, as they did round Drake; and Blake has been credited with exploits which modern research has shown to be without foundation. Men came to believe that there was scarcely a potentate within the Straits that did not feel the weight of his arm, that the Pope himself cowered in St. Angelo at the thunder of his guns. The truth is that what he accom-

[1] Gardiner, *Commonwealth and Protectorate*, ii. 465, May 1654.

plished by force of arms was almost nothing, and the reaction tends to treat the cruise as of small importance. Yet the old mythical view is the true one. Those legendary achievements are but the index of the place which the cruise held in men's minds at the time, the echo of its deep moral effect, and they mark for us more clearly than the most exact chronicle the opening of men's eyes to the true meaning of Mediterranean power to England.

The actual intention of the expedition still remains a crux for historians. The original idea is clear enough. On the conclusion of the Dutch war there was a debate in the Council on the disposal of the magnificent fleet of a hundred and sixty sail that was then in commission. The project most favoured was the conquest of the Spanish West Indies. The main objection was that it would involve the loss of our trade with Spain and endanger that to the Levant. To this it was answered that hostilities would necessarily be confined to the West Indies, for the English trade was of so much importance to both Spain and Flanders that Philip could not allow the war to spread to Europe. The idea that you might attack the colonial possessions of a power just as you could make reprisals on her ships without a general state of war arising is strange enough to our ears, but it was only that on which England and Spain had mutually acted ever since the commencement of what are now usually called the piratical operations of Drake and his fellows. The argument was sound enough, but it was met by the objection that, even if the proposed expedition did not lead to war, the Mediterranean trade would still lie open to Spanish reprisals. To this it was replied 'that that will not prove so; for, having peace with France (which must be supposed upon this war), we shall have the benefit of their friendship and harbours upon the Mediterranean Sea, which are much more useful for us than the Spaniards'—that is to say, we should be in a position to protect the Levant trade by a fleet acting from French ports. Thereupon it was proposed to allot forty sail for the Channel, eight each for the Scottish, Irish, and Newfound-

land stations, thirty for the West Indies, and sixteen for the Straits, the rest being paid off. Here then is the germ of Blake's famous fleet. It was originally designed to protect English commerce in the Mediterranean while the Spanish West Indies were attacked.[1]

Before it sailed, however, its true intentions, as we shall see, became much more of an enigma. Blake's final instructions have never been found. They remain in the obscurity with which they were religiously veiled at the time. The latest and best authority believes that the admiral had none at all, except some vague directions to act against the Barbary corsairs and generally to protect the English Levant trade.[2]

This is almost certainly the truth. He was sent, as Mansell was sent a generation before, under the time-honoured veil that had long ago been worn transparent. He was to act as Mansell was to act on such instructions as should subsequently reach him. He was sent as Mansell was sent and as our Mediterranean squadron is maintained to-day as the symbol of English power, and to be ready at the controlling point for any eventuality. Of all this it is impossible that there should be any direct evidence; but everything becomes clear if, in the light we have of all that had gone before, we trace the

[1] *Clarke Papers*, vol. iii. App. B. p. 205.

[2] See Gardiner, iii. 373 *n*. The orders he there refers to are copied into the *Entry Book* of Car. II., No. 4, p. 17 under the impossible date of July 1656. It should be, he says, July 22, 1654. There is, however, a difficulty in assigning this date. The entry runs, 'On receiving these instructions, you shall with the fleet under your command sail with the first convenient wind and weather unto Algiers.' Now on July 22, 1654, Blake had no fleet under his command. He did not hoist his flag till August 10 (Weale's *Journal*, *Sloane MSS.* 1431). The orders further authorise him, in case the Algerines refuse the demands he is charged to make, 'to assault them by land or sea, and fight with and slay all persons opposing you.' Now on March 14, 1655, Blake at Cagliari wrote complaining that he had no such authority. His general instructions limited him to blockading the corsairs' ports for a few days, and he asked for express authority to attack their ports (Thurloe, iii. 232, and see *post*, p. 270). It is clear therefore that these instructions must be subsequent to his request of March 24, 1655. In all probability they were the answer he got, and the true date is the summer of 1655. So far then as the entry is to be trusted, it is evidence that Algiers was not his original objective, but rather an afterthought, when the success of his attack at Tunis was known.

growth of the idea in the minds of Cromwell and his advisers.

Ever since Badiley's defeat Longland had not ceased to urge the importance of a Mediterranean squadron. When he heard of Monk's final victory over the Dutch he redoubled his importunity. It was not merely a question of protecting commerce, he said, but it meant 'many other advantages in relation to France, Spain, and Barbary.' Getting no response, he showed how such a squadron as he desired might maintain itself without any expense to the state by reprisals upon the rich Levant trade of France. Apart from every other consideration, as he further urged, so contemptuous had the neighbouring Princes grown since the Dutch had been left in undisputed mastery of those seas, that a fleet was absolutely necessary to bring them to reason.

His well-reasoned importunity, poured into the ears of Cromwell's ministers with ever increasing vehemence, cannot have been without its effect, supported as it was by the lamentations of the powerful Levant Company. It is even probable that it would have led to action before the conclusion of the Dutch war but for Monk's opposition. Cromwell's trust in the wide capacity and judgment of his new admiral was daily increasing, and he, as we have seen, was opposed on the broad principles of his art to any weakening of the main fleet till that of the enemy was completely crushed. Events showed the justness of his view. For the pressure he brought to bear at the vital point soon compelled the States to recall their squadron from the Straits. But even then Longland's importunity did not cease. Since the Dutch had gone, he said, the French had become worse than ever. English commerce seemed to be held fair game for everybody, and a squadron was more necessary than ever to restore English prestige.

The despatch in which he insisted on this view reached London early in April 1654, just after the peace with Holland was signed, and indications at once appear that at last he was to be heard. Before the month was out the Council of State, as we have seen, had practically decided

in principle on a Mediterranean squadron. Mazarin had taken alarm and was writing to Bordeaux, his Ambassador in London, that he was to keep him well informed as to the ships that were to be detached from the main fleet. In spite of the peace there was no cessation of naval activity in the English dockyards, and half Europe was anxiously asking where the blow was to fall. The Grand Duke of Tuscany promptly trimmed his sails for a storm in the old quarter. In the last days of the war the Dutch had sunk a British ship within the limits of his port, and he now seized two of their vessels as security that reparation should be made to the injured owners. In every exchange in Italy the coming of the English fleet was the subject of anxious discussion, and most people saw in Cromwell a new and more terrible Gustavus Adolphus, and were sure it was Civita Vecchia, the Pope's own port, that would first feel the smart.

But of all men Mazarin had the gravest cause for concern. He had again got a working hold of France; but Condé, the leader of the rebellious opposition, was in communication with the Protector, and an English fleet at Bordeaux or Rochelle could easily stir the smouldering embers of insurrection into a new flame. Worse still, there was the prospect of Blake's being able to deal him such another blow as had robbed him of Dunkirk. For Mazarin was once more reviving his old Mediterranean policy. Since it had broken down four years before, Spain had been making steady progress in both Italy and Catalonia. But the Duke of Guise was now free again, and Mazarin had resolved to use him for a second bold bid for the domination of the Two Sicilies. In Toulon a powerful expedition was being prepared, and Monsieur de Nieuchèse, who was in command of the French Ocean squadron at Brest, was under orders to carry every available ship to join it at the earliest possible moment. Nor was this all. This time the attempt was to be supported by a powerful coalition. Savoy was already engaged. Genoa, which was in a state of sullen anger with Spain, was being pressed to join and accept a French protectorate. It was also hoped that, as before, the new Portuguese

kingdom, in return for France securing its recognition by the Pope, would contribute a powerful contingent to the fleet. Lastly, the Papacy itself was to be persuaded to seize the opportunity of throwing off the oppression of Spain. As Longland got wind of the design, he kept sending home news of its development. He knew by this time that the fleet he had been praying for was coming, and he pointed out the splendid opportunity it afforded for England to exert a mastering influence. Every one said—so he wrote—that, before such a coalition as Mazarin was forming, Spain would not survive in Italy without the Protector's help. So keen was he for action that he had taken steps to secure an accurate list of the Toulon fleet, and begged that it might be handed to Blake or Badiley.[1]

Meanwhile at home the idea of a Mediterranean fleet had been growing. Neither France nor Spain would come to terms, and on June 5, in secret sitting of the Council of State, it was resolved that a fleet of twenty-four ships should be prepared 'for the Straits' and another of fourteen for the 'Western design.'[2] Thus the Mediterranean squadron had risen to the first place instead of being, as it was originally, inferior to that which was to operate in the West Indies. No reason appears for the change. We can only note that it was contemporaneous with the discovery of a plot against the Protector, in which the Baron de Baas, who had been specially sent over by Mazarin to smooth his relations with Cromwell, was supposed to be implicated; and, further, that the period of active preparation which immediately followed coincided with the Protector's last efforts to induce France to join in a Protestant coali ion against Spain and with his ultimate conviction that he must take his own course.

As Blake's fleet gathered life, Mazarin grew feverishly anxious. Neither Guise nor Nieuchèse was ready to sail, and he kept petulantly pressing and taunting them to be gone. At the same time Longland's suggestions grew

[1] Longland's despatches are in Thurloe, ii.
[2] *Dom. Cal.* p. 200.

more ambitious and strangely tuned to the Protector's new note. The Toulon fleet, he said, was still in port, not daring to sail for fear of Blake, and then came a hint that opens up a startling vista of possibilities. We have seen already how keenly he felt the weak point of England's position in the Mediterranean, and how he lamented to see her dependent on the Italian Princes for a base. Now he saw Genoa hesitating between the two dominations that never ceased to threaten her, and the old dream of Ralegh's time revived in his active mind. Of all states, he said, Genoa was the least prepared for war. Though rich, her wealth lay solely in commerce and finance, and she could not even feed her population from her own territory. He knew her weakness, he knew her temptations, and he knew her splendid harbour. From where he was he could see all, and he looked and longed. 'They have the best port in Italy,' he wrote, when he knew Blake was about to sail. 'I wish it were in the hands of others that have more occasion for it.' In Cromwell's tangled negotiations with France and Spain, while each was threatened by a gathering fleet, from each was demanded the conquest of a continental port as the price of his goodwill. From Spain he would require Calais, from France Dunkirk. Yet of a port within the Straits, where, in view of the strained relations with France, it was now far more necessary, not a word was said. As far as we know, Longland's hint fell dead. Yet it is strange that, seeing how the navy men felt the necessity, and how little Cromwell's dreams of continental action were limited by practical difficulties, the seed did not ever show some sign of growth. The actual adverse occupation of Genoa was of course out of the question, but it is by no means clear that some arrangement might not have been come to, by which the desired ends would have been achieved in a more peaceable way. A naval protectorate, for instance, would have freed Genoa from the domination of both Spain and France, and in return she could well have afforded to cede or lease to England a port in Corsica. Such an arrangement would have secured Cromwell's position in the Mediterranean better perhaps than any step he could

have taken. Nor could a more favourable moment have been looked for to open negotiations. It was at this time that the fear of a league between England and Spain was holding Genoa back from France, and she was about to make advances to the Protector for a close commercial alliance, and that with an eagerness which leaves little doubt she was prepared to pay a very high price to turn the stream of English trade from Leghorn to her own quays.

Whatever might have come of it, it is unfortunate that a suggestion, which seemed so exactly to hit the exigencies of Cromwell's position, did not reach London in time for it to be turned to even diplomatic advantage. Before it was received Blake had started, and the situation appeared to have taken definite shape. Though the Marquis of Bordeaux was still in England, the negotiations with France were practically broken off. In spite of the 'Western' squadron, which was still being brought forward at Plymouth, Spain seemed to have it all her own way, and Mazarin's anxiety redoubled for the success of his Neapolitan venture. At the end of July Blake's squadron was gathering in the Downs and Guise had not yet even left Paris. On August 1 Mazarin, losing all patience, wrote him a sharp letter saying that, if he did not embark within ten days, the King would divert the expedition to another object. That very day the gay young Duke set out, and a week later Mazarin was assuring him that, if he would only sail immediately, the reinforcements he required to bring his force up to the promised strength should follow him at once.[1] At the same time he was bringing all his weight to bear upon Genoa to press her into his design, and assuring her that as yet there was no league between England and Spain. Nieuchèse in Brest was being scolded as roundly as Guise, and being angrily told that if he did not get to sea at once he would find his passage into the Mediterranean barred altogether.[2] Mazarin at any rate had little doubt that the first object of Blake's fleet was to frustrate Guise's design.

Though Cromwell's intentions were still uncertain, to

[1] *Lettres de Mazarin*, vi. 607, 610, 613.
[2] *Ibid.* 591, 598, 608.

outward appearance he had practically cast in his lot with Spain. On August 5, only a fortnight after he had finally made up his mind to prosecute his design against the West Indies, he wrote to Philip to say that Blake was about to sail for the Mediterranean to protect English commerce and begging the hospitality of his ports.[1] On August 10 Blake hoisted his flag in the Downs, with Badiley for vice-admiral, and Jordan, who was one of the new and most brilliant reputations of the Dutch war, for the second flag-officer. By the 25th he was at Plymouth, and Mazarin was still pressing Guise to get to sea and reprimanding Nieuchèse for his delay more testily than ever. After one ineffectual attempt to get out of the Channel, which lost him ten days, Blake finally got away on October 8, and after looking into Lisbon, presumably to see whether there was any sign of the Brest division having put in there or of a move from the Portuguese fleet, he passed on his way.[2]

Mazarin's anxiety was now extreme. For all his pressing, Guise had only got to sea a fortnight before Blake finally cleared the Lizard, and Nieuchèse with the Brest division was still at his moorings. No sooner did the harassed minister know that Blake had really gone than he told Bordeaux he must find out what his destination was. A week later this despatch was followed by

[1] Debate in the Protector's Council, July 20, 1654, *Clarke Papers*, iii. 207.

[2] The dates and main details of Blake's cruise, except where otherwise stated, are taken from Weale's *Journal* (*Sloane MSS.* 1431). Weale was an officer in the 'Amity' frigate.

The list of his fleet as given by Penn (vol. ii. 150), and corrected from Weale's *Journal* and Blake's despatches, was as follows, besides two or three auxiliary or store vessels:

Rates	Ships	Guns	Men	Commanders
3 second .	'George' . .	60	350	Robert Blake, General John Stokes, Captain
	'Andrew' .	54	300	Rich. Badiley, Vice-Adm.
	'Unicorn' .	54	300	Jos. Jordan, Rear-Adm.
4 third . .	'Langport' .	50	260	Roger Cuttance
	'Bridgewater' .	50	260	Anth. Earning
	'Worcester' .	46	240	William Hill
	'Plymouth' .	50	260	Rich. Stayner.

instructions to demand peremptorily from the Protector what orders Blake had about dealing with French ships, and to ask for his passports if he did not receive a satisfactory answer.[1] At the same time Louis himself wrote to Nieuchèse at Brest, telling him that Blake had sailed for the Mediterranean, and that he was to put to sea at once in order to get ahead of him and join the Chevalier Paul, who was in command of Guise's fleet, before the English appeared. 'I am sure,' said the King, 'that if you and Paul are only together, when they meet you, they will not dare to attack, and that under commanders so brave and experienced as you and Paul it will not be easy to win any advantage over my forces.' There was still more anxiety in what followed. 'I have written to-day,' he added, 'to the Sieur de Bordeaux, my Ambassador in England, to demand of the Protector an explanation in

Rates	Ships	Guns	Men	Commanders
11 fourth .	'Hampshire' .	34	160	Benjamin Blake
	'Foresight' .	36	160	Peter Mootham
	'Kent' . .	40	170	Edw. Witheridge
	'Taunton' .	36	160	Thos. Vallis
	'Diamond' .	36	160	John Harman
	'Ruby' . .	36	160	Edm. Curtis
	'Newcastle' .	40	180	Nath. Cobham
	'Amity' . .	30	120	Henry Pack
	'Maidstone' .	32	140	Thos. Adams
	'Princess Mary'	34	150	John Lloyd
	'Elias' . .	32	140	John Symonds
3 fifth . .	'Mermaid' .	24	90	
	'Success' .	24	60	Wm. Kendall
	'Sophia' .	24	60	Rob. Kirby
3 sixth . .	'Hector' . .	16	35	
	'Dolphin' .	16	45	John Smith
	'Nonsuch' Ketch	10	30	

In Penn's list the 'Success' and 'Sophia' appear as above, but in the main fleet list of 1653, under the same commanders, they are given as 38-gun frigates with crews of 150 and 160 men. In Derrick's list of 1652, from the *Pepys Miscellany*, the 'Success' appears as a fourth rate with 150 men. Presumably she was the French prize 'Jules,' which Blake had taken in 1651. Blake, in his despatch of March 24, 1655, speaks of having with him the 'Mermaid,' a 24-gun fifth rate with 90 men. It is not in Penn's list.

[1] *Lettres de Mazarin*, October 21-26 (o.s.), pp. 373, 378.

writing of the manner in which his fleet is to behave to mine, giving him to understand that I have no fear of an action if it has to be fought, but that I would gladly avoid any incident which may prevent the nations enjoying an assured repose and disturb their commerce. It is your duty to avoid a meeting with the English fleet, but if by chance you fall in with it, I doubt not you will maintain the position (*les avantages*) that is due to me. . . . . Perhaps, and I desire it should be so, the Protector will make such an answer to the Sieur de Bordeaux that the fears I have suggested will vanish.'[1]

So far from Bordeaux receiving the explanation he was instructed to demand, he could not even obtain an audience; and yet, instead of his taking his leave, the negotiations for an alliance were reopened. The fact is that, situated as France was, and in spite of Turenne's recent successes on her northern frontier against Condé and the Spaniards, she could not face a British fleet in the Mediterranean; and while Blake's flag was flying Mazarin felt himself compelled, at almost any cost, to keep the peace with the Protector. Blake's fleet was the trump card of the game. It was dangled before his eyes like a bait to lead him on, and whenever he tried to seize it, it was snatched away, and fresh concessions demanded. 'When I reproach them,' wrote Bordeaux the day after Blake had joined the fleet, 'that at previous conferences they have offered, in return for a subsidy of two million livres, to maintain twenty vessels in the Mediterranean to support our designs there, they tell me that these were only conversations, which were not binding.' In vain Mazarin thus tried again and again to get the card into his own hand, and again and again was forced to submit to fresh humiliations for fear of seeing it played against him.[2]

Meanwhile Blake, with his flag flying in the 'St.

[1] 'Archives de la Maison de Nieuchèse,' November 6, 1654 (n.s.), cited by Jal, *Du Quesne*, i. 212.

[2] Bordeaux to Brienne, November 13–23, 1654, Thurloe, ii. 724, and same to same, p. 731. Mazarin to Bordeaux, December 28 (o.s.), Guizot, ii. App. xiii. p. 490. Instructions to Bordeaux, July 6–11, *ibid.* p. 460. Bordeaux to Brienne, August 11–21, *ibid.* p. 479.

George' (or 'George' by her puritanical name), a ship of sixty guns, had appeared before Cadiz and anchored off Rota at the point of the bay. Besides smaller vessels he had twenty ships and frigates, the smallest of which carried twenty-four guns. All had been specially sheathed for a long cruise in the Mediterranean,[1] and Blake had the ball before him. The Governor sent off to invite him to enter the harbour, but Blake replied that he was bound with all speed for the Straits. The fact was that he had found the English *chargé d'affaires* awaiting him at Cadiz with information that four days previously nine French war ships had passed, making for the Straits. Fearing that he had missed Nieuchèse, he contented himself with handing to the Governor Cromwell's letter to Philip, and at once carried on in chase. Of his immediate business he made no secret, and far and wide through Europe spread the news how the admiral had openly proclaimed that his mission was to fight the Duke of Guise wherever he found him.[2]

Every one believed the Duke was doomed. Having finally sailed from Toulon in the last days of September, he had met with baffling gales, that broke up his fleet and delayed him so long that sixteen days out he had to water as best he could at the southern end of Sardinia. Driven from his anchors by a gale, he was forced almost under the Spanish guns at Cagliari, and there had to wait a week, hoping to get touch with his galleys which he had entirely lost. After all he had to sail without them and proceed on his way round Sicily in a sadly crippled condition.[3] For his design was not to trust again entirely to the fickle population of Naples itself, but to land somewhere in Calabria or Apuglia from the Gulf of Taranto or

[1] *Domestic Calendar*, p. 229, June 29, 1654.

[2] 'Lettre du Comte de Molina,' Guizot, i. 488. Mazarin to Bordeaux, January 2, 1655 (n.s.), *ibid.* 490, and Thurloe, iii. 41. Mazarin mentions Blake's 'boast,' but Molina merely writes that 'people say he is in chase of the French fleet.'

[3] 'Relation de tout ce qui s'est passé au voyage de Naples, par M. le Duc de Guise,' in *Recueil Historique*, Cologne, 1666, 12mo. This is a despatch which Guise wrote from 'Cap de Corse, December 17, 1654,' on his retreat to Toulon.

the Adriatic.[1] In this way he hoped to meet the cavalry which was to join him from the north, raise the country people against their Spanish masters, and approach the capital from the rear like a conqueror. So luckless however was he with the weather that, after vainly trying to double the southern cape of Sicily for three days, he had to bear up to Malta for shelter and water. There, however, to his high indignation, he received a shotted salute from the Spanish knights, and had to run back in despair to Favignano, an island at the west end of Sicily. It was in Spanish hands; but the garrison abandoned the forts that protected the anchorage, and he was able to water in peace. By this time, however, his provisions were running so short—this at least is the reason he gave—that he felt it useless to continue his original plan and resolved to proceed direct to Naples. This he did, and on November 4 he landed and occupied Castellamare in the south-east corner of the bay.

At the same time Blake entered the Straits, and heard at Gibraltar fresh news of the Brest squadron. It had not yet passed in, and he spread his frigates to get touch with it. Three days later Stayner, one of the smartest officers in the fleet, and some other captains came in to report they could see nothing of Nieuchèse, and Blake, with a sharp reprimand, promptly sent them out again.[2] From the manner in which the narrator insists on Blake's anger with the offending officers we may detect another indication of his bracing influence on the navy. Ever since the birth of the new art inefficient cruising had been its curse, and it would seem that Blake had determined to turn a new leaf. No doubt, according to the custom of the sea, his captains thought they had done their duty, and were surprised at their reception. But what was good enough for them was not good enough for a man trained in the art of war on land. Step by step the soldiers were lifting naval warfare to

[1] Longland and other intelligencers believed him to be going to land in Apuglia from the Adriatic, but in his 'Relation' (*ubi supra*) he himself only mentions Calabria.

[2] Weale's *Journal*.

a science, and there is little doubt that from this momentous sojourn of Blake in Gibraltar Road we may mark, in addition to its other consequences, another stride upon the upward way.

But for all his vigilance and discipline the days went by and not a sign of the enemy appeared. Days grew to weeks, and the most critical period of Blake's cruise, when Guise was actually at work in Naples Bay, was slipping by, while he clung in forced inaction to the station he had chosen. He could not know the man Nieuchèse was, or the orders Louis had given him. Nieuchèse had interpreted them only too faithfully. Finding, as it would seem, that Blake was before him, and mindful of his instructions to keep out of his way, he had put back into Lisbon, and there was quietly cleaning his ships. It was nearly three weeks before Blake knew this, and was convinced it was no use waiting. On November 21 he at last resolved to pass on, and after touching at Malaga and Alicante he stood across for Sardinia. He reached it on December 4, and at Cagliari heard that Guise had been there.[1] Whither he had gone no one could tell, but four days later intelligence came in that he was at Naples. On this hot scent Blake weighed without a moment's delay, and in three days was beating into the bay. But, high as had been his hopes, it was too late. Not a French ship was to be seen. The prey was already flown, and Blake had to fume under the first of those close chances of which England's record in the Mediterranean is so full.

Having seized Castellamare, Guise had proceeded to improve his holding. After a stubborn resistance and considerable loss, Torre Annunciata, a work on the Naples side, fell; but there his success ended. In vain he tried to seize the neighbouring mills, on which depended his only chance of feeding his men. The Spaniards were too strong, and the reckless plundering, which he was

[1] Weale in his *Journal* says that on December 4 they heard Guise had been there twenty-nine days before—i.e. November 5. But at this time he was at Castellamare. Guise himself says nothing of having been at Cagliari a second time. Weale therefore seems to be mistaken in the information Blake actually received.

unable to control, effectually turned the inhabitants against him. The intendant of his army reported but a week's provisions left. There was no help for it—so Guise thought—but to let go and return to Toulon for his promised reinforcements and fresh stores. In a week the whole force was embarked again. For a fortnight more, while Blake was still clinging to Gibraltar, the weather held the French fleet where it was at the mercy of a resolute attack. 'If he (Blake),' lamented Longland, when eight of Guise's retreating ships had put into Leghorn, 'if he had not stayed at the Straits mouth, but come directly for Italy, he had found all the French fleet in a pound in Naples Bay, where he might have done what he would with 'em; but all will be for the best.' [1]

There was certainly much truth in his godly resignation. Had Blake been in time the real significance of his cruise would not have fallen into the oblivion which has so long obscured it. Seeing the condition of Guise's fleet and the veteran material under Blake's command, a great victory must have recorded the object of the campaign indelibly. But as it was the work was done without shedding of blood. For the second time the feather-headed Duke had courted disaster, and shattered Mazarin's dreams of Mediterranean power. How far Blake's presence had contributed directly to the miscarriage it is difficult to say. The failure was mainly due to Guise's irresponsible determination to abandon his original intention of landing in Calabria. At a blow it upset Mazarin's elaborately laid plans, and threw the Duke back on trusting once more to the disaffection of the Neapolitans. Though Guise himself says nothing on the point, we know how nervous the French authorities were about the English Mediterranean squadron, and we may be sure that Guise's fatal step was largely due to the fear of being shut into the Adriatic by Blake. Nieuchèse's continued delay in joining was no doubt the immediate cause, but this delay was also the result of Blake's action. His interposition

[1] Thurloe, iii. 12.

at Gibraltar between the two French squadrons had in fact rendered both of them impotent. Nor must it be forgotten how important was the moral support of his presence to the other side. In every Italian seaport the rumour was that Cromwell's admiral was coming to assist the Spaniards. It did everything to restore their failing prestige, and must have materially assisted the Viceroy of Naples in securing as he did, by timely concessions, the loyalty of his restless subjects.

However this may be, Blake's presence put an end to all hope that the attempt could be renewed. When, on December 7, Guise wrote from Cape Corso in Corsica to announce his retreat, he appears fully to have expected that he would be sent out again. He was not going to allow a man to land, he said. He meant to be ready to act the moment he received his orders. But, however sanguine the Duke might be, Mazarin was under no illusions. Though in his letters he tried to make light of his failure, setting against it Turenne's successes on the northern frontier, it is clear he felt his prestige had suffered a severe blow, and that his great design was dead beyond present recovery. Blake himself did not fail to emphasise the situation. Having ascertained at Naples, where he was accorded a brilliant reception, all that had taken place, he did not let the grass grow under his feet. Leaving one or two vessels behind him, presumably for intelligence purposes, he gave chase to Guise with the bulk of the fleet. But he was just too late. On December 20 he looked into Leghorn. Eight French ships had put in there, but for fear, as some said, that Blake would get between them and Toulon, they were already gone, and he had to learn that the whole force was safe in its own ports. For Guise to stir out again with Blake where he was, was not to be thought of.

It was clearer than ever that, before France could make any real progress in the Mediterranean, she must come to an understanding with England. So, in spite of all the provocation Louis had received, Bordeaux was told to defer his departure and use the delay in a fresh effort to bring the Protector to reason. The negotiations

therefore continued as before, but with as little success. Cromwell could not but feel the enhanced advantage of his position, and Bordeaux was as little able to conceal the increased eagerness of his master for a treaty. Louis conceded everything but the claim of England to intervene on behalf of French Protestants, and on this point the Protector was equally determined to insist. So the condition of reprisal, that was scarcely removed from war, continued. Blake was not recalled and remained to carry out the original intentions of his commission.

Though it is on the remaining incidents of the cruise, real and imaginary, that its fame has rested, they are insignificant beside that part of his operations which closed with the dispersal of Guise's force. The story of his having at Civita Vecchia exacted from the Pope an indemnity for having allowed Rupert to sell prizes in the Papal ports is without foundation. A similar tale in relation to the Grand Duke of Tuscany is traceable to a Genoese source. Their Ambassador Extraordinary was at this time in London, pressing the Protector to conclude a reciprocal commercial treaty by which the subjects of each state should be on equal footing with those of the other. Their main object was, as we have seen, to divert the British trade from Leghorn to their own port. But the envoy did not fail to point out that while such a treaty would be of great benefit to the Genoese state and its independence, England would also gain by it in other ways. 'It would also,' he wrote to Cromwell, 'be useful and beneficial to the English nation for the many and obvious reasons which, without doubt, will be in the mind of your most serene Highness.' [1]

There seems in the words a suggestion such as Longland had hinted at some months before, that Genoa might become for the English navy what she had so long been for that of Spain. But it led to nothing. Though Cromwell entertained the idea, the merchants were loath to desert Leghorn; and though the Genoese never lost an opportunity of offering their hospitality to the English

[1] Thurloe, iii. 118; Gardiner, *History*, iii. 374–6, and see also his note on 'Blake at Leghorn' in *Eng. Hist. Review*, xiv. 109.

fleet, English trade remained faithful to the Medici. So far from quarrelling with the Grand Duke, Blake met with a cordial welcome, and, in spite of the activity of the Genoese, his visit served to knit still more closely the remarkable sympathy that had so long existed between the English and the Florentines. If any satisfaction was needed it was amply afforded in the full liberty which Blake was allowed to refresh his fleet for the completion of the work which yet lay before him. Still there were reports that the French fleet at Toulon was coming out again, and he would not leave his dominating position until he had learned for certain that Louis had ordered his ships to be laid up for the winter. Discouraged by his complete failure, the King was going to content himself with sending out privateers. 'And so,' wrote Blake complacently, 'there will be no further stop to our proceedings from Trapani.' [1]

[1] Despatch, *Add. MSS.* 9304, f. 99.

CHAPTER XVII

BLAKE AND THE TURKISH SEA POWER

THE proceedings to which Blake referred were those which had been made the pretence for sending him to the Mediterranean. Well had they served Cromwell's turn, and his Admiral had now leisure to attend to them. By a dramatic turn the duty before him carries us back to our starting point. We have traced step by step how the germ planted half a century before by Ward, the English mutineer, had worked with ever widening effect till it had changed the whole conditions and meaning of Mediterranean power. With an English fleet dominant in its waters and no rival navy in a position to dispute its command we see the revolution consummated, and the first use England was to make of her new power was to strike at the point where the pregnant seed had been sown. Tunis was Blake's objective, and on January 15, 1655, he sailed from Leghorn for Trapani to meet the ships he had left at Naples. With the exception of four frigates which he had detached to watch the Balearic islands for French privateers on the trade route, and a ketch left behind at Leghorn to bring on letters from home, his whole force was with him.[1]

It was likely to be wanted, for Blake had before him an undertaking not unlike that which he had just abandoned for the time, and which was similarly calculated to mark the new domination. But now it was a still more momentous struggle in which he was about to intervene—the ceaseless pressure of the East upon the West. Concurrently with the contest between France and Spain for the command of the Western Mediterranean

[1] Despatch of March 14, 1655, *Add. MSS.* 9304.

a still fiercer one had been raging for the command of the Eastern half. Ten years previously it had commenced by the sudden descent of an overwhelming Turkish force upon Crete, which still formed part of the Venetian empire. The new storm was yet another outcome of the Thirty Years' War. While Christendom was absorbed in the internecine strife it was inevitable that the Moslem should seize the opportunity to push further westward into the Mediterranean. It was again Venice who was left to bar the way, and the Sultan had determined to drive her from her ancient possessions of Crete, as he had driven her from Cyprus.

The war naturally turned upon the command of the sea, and Venice had chartered a number of English ships to reinforce her navy. It was some of these that Longland had induced her to spare for Badiley's relief. There were reasons why scarcely any sacrifice could be too great to win the goodwill of the Commonwealth. Realising the tremendous issue at stake, she had sought in every Court in Europe to induce the combatants to abandon the fratricidal struggle, but hitherto in vain. From the small Papal navy and the Knights of Malta alone had any assistance been forthcoming; and, seeing herself left almost alone to fight the battle of Christendom, she rose to the occasion with all her old heroism and resource. Though Canea, the westernmost part of the island, fell an easy prey, Crete was far from conquered. Year after year the struggle had gone on at the sacrifice of innumerable lives and treasure untold. In Mocenigo Venice had found a commander worthy to stand beside the greatest of her great names, and under his daring and sagacious leadership the Candiote war, as it was called, was made to glow as one of the brightest chapters in her annals. Still it was all she could do with her enfeebled resources to hold her own, and so soon as the Commonwealth was revealed as a new force in Europe she applied to it for help.

It was some time, however, before she could wipe out the ill-effects of her unhappy patronage of the Stuart Court, and from the Long Parliament she received little

encouragement. With the change of Government, however, she took fresh hope, and not without reason. It was a cause which appealed strongly to Cromwell's crusading spirit, and for a time he seems to have doubted whether this was not the right way to use the power which God had given him. He told the Venetian resident, at his first audience in January 1654, that he had every desire to assist the Republic, which he considered the buckler of religion against its most powerful foe. Later in the year, when an Ambassador Extraordinary arrived on the same mission and diplomatically stirred the Protector's religious zeal, he replied that the generous defence offered by Venice against the common foe laid every Christian Prince under obligations to her; that he himself had often felt the pricks and goad of zeal for the service of God, and that, if the embassy had only come sooner, it might have found the conjuncture more favourable to its objects.[1]

But high as was the obligation under which Venice had placed the Commonwealth by granting Longland's request, and strongly as her appeal moved a man of Cromwell's nature, there were two insuperable difficulties in the way of a war with Turkey—one, the opposition of the powerful Levant Company, which was alarmed for its Turkish interests, and the other, the West Indian adventure, on which Cromwell had already decided to embark. It is possible of course that, in spite of these objections, he gave Blake to understand he might do what he could, but of this there is no trace. It is more probable that at Leghorn the admiral, with his ardour only whetted by having missed Guise, found the local influences irresistible. All Italy was ringing with the latest exploits of Mocenigo and mourning his death. Isolated with a few ships in the midst of a great Turkish fleet off the Dardanelles, he had fought his way clear, dealing such destruction around him that it took the Capitan Pasha a month to get his fleet fit for sea again. But, in spite of Mocenigo's heroism, a Turkish fleet had

[1] H. R. Brown, *Venetian Studies*, p. 370 *et seq.*

been able to get through to the relief of the army in Crete, and he had died, men said, of a broken heart.

It is easy to understand how Blake's chivalrous spirit, burning as it was to do some deed that should make the name of England resound through Europe, longed to take up the dead admiral's sword and strike a blow for the hard-pressed Republic. At Leghorn, moreover, it could not be forgotten how, in spite of her necessities, Venice had consented to release the English ships in her service at Badiley's call. What half promises Longland may have made to secure such a concession we cannot tell; but, as Badiley himself was there as vice-admiral of the fleet, the two of them could easily have persuaded Blake that some return was called for. Authority or no authority, a blow for the relief of Candia was in the spirit of the high purpose for which he had been sent out, and in the spirit which inspired Cromwell's foreign policy as he had recently declared it. 'God,' said the Protector in silencing Lambert's objections to an aggressive line of action, 'God has not brought us hither where we are, but to consider the work that we may do in the world as well as at home.' It was a sentiment entirely in accord with Blake's nature, and, as though from Heaven, a chance was offered him in a manner and of a nature that he was no man to resist.

His resolution was as sudden as it was heroic. On January 15, on the eve of sailing from Leghorn, he had written home to say he was going to Trapani to pick up his detached frigates, and so to Tunis or Tripoli as seemed best on the spot. That up to this time he had no very definite orders is clear. Feeling the importance of his presence in the Mediterranean, he begged that victuals might be sent out to him, so that he might keep his station 'so as to be ready,' as he said, 'for any service which the Providence of God or instructions shall lead us unto.'[1] He had hardly got to sea when, though the weather had promised thoroughly fair, he encountered a furious gale which for three days kept his whole fleet in constant peril of being cast away among the islands off

[1] *Add. MSS.* 9304, f. 99.

the Tuscan coast, and finally drove him back to Leghorn. His faith was sorely tried. 'It hath pleased God,' he wrote in describing the catastrophe he had escaped, 'to exercise us with variety of wind and weather, and with divers mixed providences and strange dispensations never to be forgotten by us, especially in regard that He hath been pleased in them all to rouse His compassion to prevail against His threatenings, and His mercy to triumph over His judgment.'[1] In this frame of mind he received a piece of information which under the circumstances can only have seemed to him like the finger of Heaven.

News had just come in that the war-ships of all the Barbary states from Algiers to Tripoli, the flower of the Moslem marine, were to concentrate at Tunis on February 12 for the Sultan's service against Crete. The war had long focussed round the siege of Candia, the Venetian capital of the island. Mocenigo's line of strategy had been a vigorous offensive with the fleet, whereby he had established a command of the Ægean Sea, and continually menaced the Turkish possessions that lay upon its waters. In this way he had rendered their communications with the besieging force in Crete in the last degree precarious, and at the same time compelled the Sultan to dissipate his strength in innumerable garrisons. In the present campaign the Venetian fleet was to act in two divisions—one blockading the Dardanelles and the other laying siege to Malvoisia in the Morea, the Turkish advanced base of supply for Crete. Under these circumstances it is clear that, if the Turkish army before Candia could receive relief from the Barbary side, the task of the Venetians would be seriously complicated, while, on the other hand, if Blake could succeed in crushing the combined fleet of the tributary states, he would give the Venetians the practical ordering of the campaign.[2] How could he hesitate? In the whole conduct of his life he was a zealot of childlike faith, whose every utterance shows that an intimate communion with the Deity was as real a thing to him as it

[1] *Add. MSS.* 9304, f. 101.

[2] Daru, *Hist. de Venise* (ed. 1853), vol. v. cap. i. Blake's despatches of March 14, 1655, in *Add. MSS.* 9304 and Thurloe, iii. 232.

was to Cromwell. Left practically to his own initiative, he had been trusting, as we have seen, that the Providence of God would lead him on, and he can no longer have doubted the purpose of the gale which had driven him back to Leghorn.

Full of this great intention Blake lay chafing at his moorings till the end of the month. When at last, on January 31, the weather permitted him to get clear, he had thus less than a fortnight in hand, and, ill-provisioned as he was, he determined in his impatience to make a dash straight for his objective without calling at Trapani for supplies as he had intended. So rapid was his movement that in a week he was before Tunis, but it was only to encounter another disappointment. The first thing he learnt was that his information was false. There was no concentration, and the chance of the resounding exploit on which he was bent was gone. Still the simple words of his despatch which cover his disappointment leave no doubt of his intention, and he must be given all credit for the high purpose he had formed. It was the true Nelson touch, and *nothing* in Nelson's life marks more indisputably the spirit of the great commander. For such men it is not enough to excuse inertness by resting on orders that are indistinct, timid, or lacking in thoroughness. He perceives the broad stream of policy on which his superiors are floating, and dares to show them, even before they clearly see themselves, the course they should steer. In this great spirit he came near to hurling the new force of his country against the East in the old quarrel, and raising its fallen name higher in the face of Europe than any other means could have achieved. It was prestige he was sent forth to seek, and only by some such heroic stroke could it be truly won. So it was we see him, full of the love of God and his country, raging round the Mediterranean to seek a foeman worthy of the weapon he had tempered, and finding none.

Still, in spite of his disappointment, a crumb of comfort remained. In the neighbouring Porto Farina, the new naval headquarters of the Tunisian state, lay nine war ships, and Blake despatched a squadron of four frigates,

under Captain Hill of the 'Worcester' (his usual cruiser commodore), across the gulf to blockade them. Having thus secured the ground, he proceeded with the prosaic business on which he had nominally been sent out. His actual instructions, so far as we know them, were to demand the restitution of a ship called the 'Princess,' with an indemnity, and the release of all British captives. It can hardly be said that justice was entirely on the admiral's side. In 1646 a man called Edmund Casson had been sent out by the Parliamentary Government on a mission to the Barbary states to negotiate the release of English prisoners and a treaty to secure the immunity of English vessels. Such a treaty he successfully concluded with Algiers, but his negotiations with Tunis appear to have been spoilt by the conduct of an English captain, who, having agreed to transport a company of Turkish troops to Smyrna, took the first opportunity of selling them to the Malta galleys. Another English envoy had done his best to secure their release, but the Knights demanded a price beyond his means, and the Bey remained rather aggravated than appeased. It was but natural then that, in answer to the English demands (although he was ready, as he professed, to negotiate a treaty for the future), he absolutely refused to give any satisfaction for the past.

Now Blake's instructions further directed him, 'in case of refusal of right, to seize, surprise, sink, and destroy all ships and vessels belonging to the kingdom of Tunis he should meet.' Such was the authority that Elizabeth was wont to give Drake and his fellow admirals, and which James gave Mansell. The same doubts which had so often troubled them at once arose in Blake's mind. Was he, or was he not, entitled to sink the same ships in their own ports? He could not solve the doubt; but, finding negotiation useless, promptly stood across to Porto Farina. The presence of his blockading frigates had caused the nine men-of-war to be unrigged and disarmed, and hauled close inshore under the castle, while other batteries had been erected and armed with their guns to further protect them. An entrenched camp had also been formed during the blockade; and when

Blake moved, the Bey marched down and occupied it with some thousands of horse and foot. The position was thus a very difficult one to deal with—so difficult indeed that the Council of War decided that, whatever the decision might ultimately be as to how far their instructions entitled them to go, it was impossible to attack with the fleet in the condition it was. They had but five days' drink, and very little bread. It was therefore decided to leave six frigates, under Captain Stayner of the 'Plymouth,' to continue the blockade, and to carry the rest of the fleet to Cagliari for supplies.[1]

On February 22, therefore, they sailed, 'meaning to give them a more sudden and hotter visit,' and four days later anchored at Cagliari. Here they found the four frigates that had been sent to cruise round the Balearic islands. For their pains they had to show a smart French frigate of fifteen guns, called the 'Fame,' and to report they had driven ashore and sold to the Governor of Majorca another of thirty guns, called the 'Percy,' a well-known English-built ship.[2]

[1] Blake's despatches in Thurloe, iii. 232, and *Add. MSS.* 9304; Gardiner, *Commonwealth*, iii. 376 *et seq.* The frigates detailed for the blockade were 'Plymouth,' 'Kent,' 'Newcastle,' 'Foresight,' 'Taunton,' and 'Mermaid.' As the 'Plymouth' was the only third rate, I assume Stayner was in command.

[2] This vessel, under the name 'La Persée,' is the subject of one of the heroic traditions of the French navy. Her captain was a Knight of Malta, named Valbelle, who had served with distinction in the Candiote war and had been one of Guise's captains in the late expedition. During the retreat before Blake he was hailed by an English ship which had—so the story goes—'the cool audacity to demand a salute, as a right due to the masters of the sea,' whereupon Valbelle boarded the Englishman 'with heroic ardour, trode the insolent aggressors under his feet, carried off their flag, . . . and after frightful carnage made himself master of the enemy's ship. Unwilling, however, to embitter too far the relations between the two countries, he abandoned his prize on the demand of the English commandant.' This story, incredible as it seems, receives some corroboration from Blake's remark that she was 'well known,' suggesting she was a marked ship; and also from Mazarin's instructions to Bordeaux, wherein he told him to insist on the fact as evidence of his goodwill, that Guise had restored an English prize he had taken (Mazarin to Bordeaux, January 2, 1655, Thurloe, iii. 41; same to same, January 16, Guizot, ii. App. xiv. 510). All the captains of the English navy—so the French story proceeds—were filled with extreme irritation at Valbelle's exploit and sought to wipe out the disgrace. On February 13–23, 1655, 'a division of four vessels—one of 60 guns and the others of 36 to 44—under the Chevalier Banks, found her between

These two captures brought the tale of French prizes up to seven, and after more than a fortnight spent in vain efforts to get sufficient bread, Blake had to send the 'Hampshire' and 'Maidstone' frigates to Genoa to get more and careen. Two other frigates, the 'Langport' and 'Diamond,' were to return to Majorca on the same errand, with orders to sweep the trade route as far as Alicante or Cape Palos, and then proceed also to Genoa. Thence the 'Langport' was to bring on what bread had been obtained, and the other three were to resume the cruising station about the Balearic islands. The final rendezvous was to be Alcudia Bay, in Majorca, preparatory to a demonstration on the coast of Provence.[1] On March 15, with the rest of the fleet, he weighed again for Tunis 'to put an end to the business there,' as he wrote, 'which we shall endeavour to do with all the resolution and circumspection which we can, as God shall direct us, it being a business of manifold concernments and interests, and subject to divers consequents and constructions.' Seeing the condition of affairs, this was no more than truth. While at Cagliari he had received by his ketch a letter in the Protector's own hand, giving him certain commands. What they were is unknown. The

Majorca and Cabrera.' Then follows the story of another heroic action, in which Valbelle fought all the four ships and finally ran himself ashore, and even then so maltreated the nearest Englishman that he forced the captain to accept an armistice. The following day the English broke their agreement and attacked again. For three days more Valbelle defended himself, till finally the Spanish Viceroy, overcome with admiration, allowed him and his crew to land without being treated as prisoners of war (Guérin, *Hist. Maritime*, iii. 103-5).

The 'Chevalier Banks' I cannot account for. The squadron detached from Leghorn consisted of the 'Langport,' 50 (Capt. Roger Cuttance), the 'Hampshire,' 34 (Capt. Benjamin Blake), the 'Diamond,' 36 (Capt. John Harman), and the 'Maidstone,' 32 (Capt. Thomas Adams). Blake's report on the 'Percy' affair is that, 'not being able to possess themselves of it, being also extremely battered and spoiled, they took 3,000 dollars of the Governor of that place, who was likewise upon agreement to be at the charge of sending home all the French in her, which were 300 in number' (Thurloe, iii. 232). In another despatch (*Add. MSS.* 9304) he says his men were about to burn her when the Governor made this offer. On these accounts we may safely allow Valbelle the credit of a very fine defence, after all allowance is made for the obvious and quite unnecessary exaggerations and absurdities of the French story.

[1] Blake's despatch, March 14, 1655, *Add. MSS.* 9304.

despatches accompanying it were dated January 15 and 29—just a month after Penn had sailed for the West Indies.[1] There may therefore have been a warning of the coming war with Spain, but the indications are rather that it referred to the transport of some horses which the Protector had instructed Longland to purchase for him in Italy. What Blake had in his mind was almost certainly the possibility of his action involving England in the Candiote war, and risking the Levant trade with Turkey. How grave was his anxiety his action proves. On March 21 he anchored again before the Goleta of Tunis. Here he received, and, strangely enough, by a French ship, another 'great packet of letters,' which must have been written early in February. Again, we do not know their contents, but on the following day another French ship, which had withdrawn into the Goleta, came boldly out and anchored in the middle of the English fleet with impunity, 'from which,' says an officer, 'we judged the General's letters related to a league with France.' As a matter of fact, when the despatches were written, Bordeaux was very hopeful about a treaty. In view of Penn's expedition against the Spanish Indies, it was almost as necessary to Cromwell as to Mazarin. Mazarin had declared himself eager for it, and had told Bordeaux to dwell on the recent restitution of English prizes as a mark of his sincerity. It is very possible, therefore, that Blake at this time did receive orders to suspend his operations against French commerce.

He could thus give his undivided energies to the

[1] So the despatch in *Add. MSS.* 9304. That in Thurloe, iii. 232, only mentions the receipt of one dated January 25. The letters dealt mainly with the political crisis at home and Cromwell's summary dissolution of Parliament on January 22. The Admiral's reception of the news disposes of the Royalist legend that he was politically opposed to Cromwell's methods. 'I was not surprised with the intelligence,' he wrote to Thurloe, 'the slow proceedings and awkward motions of that assembly giving great cause to the fact it would come to some such period; and I cannot but exceedingly wonder that there should yet remain so strong a spirit of prejudice and animosity in the minds of men who profess themselves most affectionate patriots as to postpone the necessary ways and means for preservation of the Commonwealth. . . . But blessed be the Lord who hath hitherto delivered and doth still deliver us.'

Barbary states. At Tunis the situation was unchanged, and he once more sent in the Protector's demands. But Blake's movements had only served to harden the Bey's heart. 'We found them,' wrote the admiral, 'more wilful and untractable than before, adding to their obstinacy much insolence and contumely, denying us all commerce of civility.' They had refused him leave to water, and had fired upon his boats, and at last Blake lost his patience. 'These barbarous provocations,' says he, 'did so far work on our spirits that we judged it necessary for the honour of our fleet, our nation, and religion, seeing they would not deal with us as friends, to make them feel us as enemies: and it was therefore resolved in Council of War to endeavour the firing of their ships in Porto Farina.' The die being cast, he once more retired to Trapani with the double object of filling up with water and lulling the Bey into security. There he remained a week, and on the afternoon of April 3 was back again off the port. All was as before. The Tunis vessels were still lying under the batteries, a pistol-shot from shore, the coast was lined with musketeers, and some sixty guns frowned from the castle and works. A final council was called to consider the formidable task; but first, in the true Cromwellian spirit, they 'sought the Lord by prayer.' The answer quickly came. It was to attack and burn the ships on the morrow where they lay.[1]

At the first glimmer of dawn the ships began to take up their allotted stations. 'The fourth-rate frigates,' we are told, 'were first under sail, and went near the castle and works.' Captain Cobham in the 'Newcastle' led the way, followed by the rest of the fourth and fifth rates, and all came to anchor, says another officer, 'near the Turks' nine ships, who lay close to the castle and the forts by it.'[2] Badiley, the vice-admiral, in the 'Andrew,' with

[1] See a letter, April 9 and 10, from the fleet in a tract called *A Book of the Continuation of Foreign Passages*, 1657, Brit. Mus. E. 1954 (3) 4to. The other main authorities are Blake's despatch, April 18, in Thurloe, iii. 390, and Weale's *Journal*. An excellent chart and note on the alteration of the coast is in Gardiner, *Commonwealth &c.* iii. 381.

[2] *Continuation of Foreign Passages*. It gives the fullest details of the ships engaged. Seven vessels, it says, followed the 'Newcastle,' viz. 'Kent,'

Stayner in the 'Plymouth,' then went in, quickly followed by the admiral with the rest of the heavier ships, the 'Worcester,' 'Unicorn,' 'Bridgwater,' and 'Success,' and then six second and third rates. 'All anchored,' we are told, 'just against the body of the castle, within musket-shot, and began to play their broadsides.' The whole evolution was performed with perfect ease, 'the Lord,' as Blake said, 'being pleased to favour us with a gentle gale off the sea, which cast all the smoke upon them and made our work the more easy.'

It will be seen that with the force at his command Blake must have been able to develop a fire formidable beyond any that Mansell had the power to do in his similar attempt at Algiers. Still for a time, as they said, it was very hot work. As the sun rose, Badiley answered the first gun from the castle and the action rapidly became general. Soon after the advanced squadron was anchored, the 'boats of execution' put off and, under cover of the storm of shot and the blinding clouds of smoke, rowed for the dismantled ships. At their approach the Tunisian crews sprang overboard and swam ashore. The panic spread to the advanced works, and in a short time the enemy had all taken refuge in the castle. Then one by one the ships were boarded, fires were kindled in each of them, and by eight o'clock the whole were blazing. By this time the fire of the castle began to slacken. 'We played very thick,' wrote an officer, 'for four or five hours.' By eleven o'clock it was completely mastered, and Blake had marked another point in the progress of naval science.

It was not the first time, as is often said, that a fleet had successfully engaged shore batteries. Landings had often been covered in this way before, and in 1602, when Sir Richard Leveson and Sir William Monson had captured the great carrack in Cezimbra Road, they had done much the same thing. But in these cases it was the landing that had led to the evacuation of the shore works. The only exception was Cezimbra Road, and

'Foresight,' 'Amity,' 'Princess Maria,' 'Pearl,' 'Mermaid,' and 'Merlin.' Weale adds the 'Ruby' and 'Diamond.'

there the fleet had been able to work under sail. This was the first time that ships had anchored close under powerful batteries and almost immediately crushed them by sheer weight of meta. For this is what had been done. In vain the enemy, as the boats drew off, attempted to regain their abandoned works. They could scarcely fire a gun. As the frigates began to warp out they tried to reach their flaming vessels, but a few shots from the heavy ships frustrated every attempt. The wind continued light, and when the work was done the admiral 'put out his flag of defiance and the whole fleet warped out almost as easily as it had gone in.' The gallant Badiley as vice-admiral was the first to anchor under the castle and he was the last to weigh, defiantly keeping his station till the doomed vessels were beyond saving. In the English ships scarcely a man was hit, showing that the enemy's fire must have been mastered from the first. The loss in the boats was more serious. It is given as from twenty-five to thirty killed, and forty to eighty wounded; but all, or nearly all, was the effect of musketry from the shore trenches. All day they watched the holocaust, and when night fell the flames still lit up the field of victory. So the work was done, and well might an exultant officer call it 'a piece of service that has not been paralleled in these parts of the world.' [1]

Blake's own note was much more modest. He could see little in his exploit but his extraordinary luck. After commenting on the insignificance of his loss he writes: 'It is also remarkable to us that shortly after our getting forth, the wind and weather changed, and continued very stormy for many days, so that we could not have effected our business had not the Lord afforded that nick of time in which it was done.' His grateful words might well make critics pause before they treat with contumely Mansell's failure at Algiers. Blake's apparently irresolute movements previous to the attack had been exactly the same as his; both were embarrassed by the same indefinite instructions; and Blake's methods might almost have been founded on Mansell's, so exactly similar were they.

[1] Weale's *Journal*.

If Mansell had only had Blake's luck with the wind—if, instead of a calm and rain after the ships were set on fire, he had had a fresh breeze as Blake had—he must have succeeded as Blake did, and the Mediterranean would have rung with an exploit whose consequences for James's prestige at that critical moment it is impossible to measure.

A comparison of the two exploits may be insisted on with profit, and pressed without disparagement to either officer. It rather serves to bring out the merits of each, and to give some light on the extent of risk that a naval commander may legitimately take. The cardinal difference between the two exploits—and it is that which has obscured their comparative merits—is that Blake entered the harbour and Mansell did not. Each was right in the particular case. We do not know the exact strength of the enemy in either case, but we do know the comparative value of the two English fleets, and we may safely say that the defences of Porto Farina were at least as inferior to those of Algiers as Blake's fleet was superior to Mansell's. It is clear that if Blake had been unable to come out when the work was done, it would have mattered little. So long as his overwhelming force remained in the harbour not a Tunisian gun could have been manned. For Mansell the inability to withdraw would have meant destruction. Had the chances been otherwise, he too doubtless would have gone in; but clearly the true risk for him to take was to attempt the firing of the ships without trying to silence the batteries. This he successfully did, and his boats retired. When Blake had done so much he also retired and withdrew to a similar position to that which Mansell held throughout. In the one case the enemy's ships continued to burn, in the other they did not, owing mainly at least to an incalculable chance of the fickle Mediterranean weather. It is not right that this difference—though it was all the difference between failure and success—should divide the credit of the two operations as widely as it has done. In appraising the judgment of the two admirals it would be difficult to know where to bestow the prize. Blake used an overwhelming force with just boldness while Mansell with just reserve

husbanded one that was inadequate. It is needless to decide; for this is certain—that there is as much true instruction for a naval officer in the one exploit as in the other.

Complete as was Blake's success at Porto Farina, it earned him nothing tangible. Having given the Bey his lesson, he at once resumed his blockade of the Goleta and repeated his demands. The Bey remained absolutely inflexible. He refused even to treat unless Blake came ashore. The destroyed ships, he said, were the Sultan's, and with him the English would have to deal. Blake was in despair. He had gained no concession, he had not released a single captive, and yet there was nothing to do but retire once more to Cagliari. There he wrote an anxious despatch to excuse his conduct. 'Seeing it has pleased God,' he said, 'to justify us herein, I hope his Highness will not be offended at it, nor any who regard duly the honour of our nation; altho' I expect to hear of many complaints and clamours of interested men.' He meant of course the Levant merchants, and in his anxiety on their account he hurried off a merchantman, which happened to be in the Goleta, with letters to the Ambassador at Constantinople to explain the provocation under which he had acted. He had to own how hazardous his exploit had been. 'I confess,' he says, 'I did awhile much hesitate myself, and was balanced in my thoughts, until the barbarous carriage of those pirates did turn the scale.' Whatever the consequences to himself and British trade, the work was done, and it was time to turn to other matters.

His programme was as yet incomplete. Guise's fleet was still on his mind, and so was Algiers, whither he now meant to proceed in order to get a confirmation of Casson's treaty and fill up with water. The work was not likely to take him long. His exploit had already told. Within a week of it, while still before Tunis, he had received a deferential invitation from the Dey of Algiers to negotiate.[1]

[1] *Continuation of Foreign Passages.* This information is added on April 10 as a postscript after the description of the action written on the 9th, and dated 'from Tunis Road.'

Thus he saw his way to gathering the first-fruits of his victory, and then returning without delay to his original object. 'From Algiers,' he wrote, while putting his fleet in order at Cagliari, 'we intend, if God enable us, to sail to Majorca, and from thence to range the coast of Provence to attend the French fleet in our way home, so long as our victuals will admit.' From this it is clear that his orders to deal gently with French commerce were not long-lived. In the last week in March Longland had sent him on two packets from London, which he must have received at Cagliari, to change his note. When these despatches were written the French negotiations had again hung fire. Cromwell absolutely refused to abandon his claim as the head of the Protestant faith to interfere on behalf of the Huguenots if he judged fit. It was a claim Louis could not possibly admit. Bordeaux was constantly asking for his passports, and the Protector was to all appearance quite prepared for a war with both France and Spain in the cause of the Reformation. So far then from being debarred from injuring French commerce, Blake must have been authorised to proceed on the original intention, and threaten the ports of Toulon and Marseilles, where a powerful expedition was being prepared for resuming the offensive in Catalonia. The incalculable force that lay in the Mediterranean squadron was thus again emphasised. Up till the very last moment it enabled Cromwell to play his double game. On the one hand it was a lever to force France into peace, and on the other a spell to lull Spain into security. Even as Blake acknowledged the subtle orders, Penn's attack on San Domingo was in full swing, and the final instructions to the Mediterranean squadron were speeding southward by sea and land.

It was on April 18 that Blake, still believing the Toulon fleet was his objective, sailed from Cagliari to Algiers, where he arrived in ten days. His stay lasted barely a fortnight; but so great was the effect of his lesson to Tunis that it was enough to do his work and do it well. So far from finding any resistance, he was received with marked respect. Victuals, water, everything he

asked for was readily furnished. Casson's treaty was renewed, with additional clauses extending its benefits to all British subjects, and in pursuance of it all who were then in captivity were given up on payment of their value. The men of the fleet were even permitted to ransom out of their pay a number of Dutchmen who swam off to the ships. It is part of the legend that Blake did much the same at Tripoli. It is certain that before receiving Cromwell's last orders he had intended to do so, but the call that had reached him at Cagliari left no time to spare for the work.[1] At Algiers he did not delay an hour longer than was necessary. So soon as victuals and captives were on board he swept on to the Balearic islands, where his three frigates were busy with French commerce.[2] On May 14, four days after he had left Algiers, he anchored at Formentara and began to take in wood; but next day, before he had done, it came on to blow and he had to make sail. On the morrow, as he stood off and on, he was joined by the 'Elias,' which was bringing wine and bread from Naples, and with her were a victualler called the 'Betty' and his ketch. His plans immediately changed. After another day spent in taking in the stores, two small frigates were detached to Alicante and Cartagena to take in the guns that were there, belonging presumably to Rupert's beaten ships. Their orders were to follow him, not to Toulon, but to Gibraltar and Cadiz. This sudden change of move, of which there is no hint before, admits of but one explanation. He had heard by despatches, which Longland had forwarded, that Spain, not France, was to be his enemy, and instead of operating on the coast of Provence he was under orders for the coast of Andalusia to intercept the Plate fleet.[3]

[1] See his despatch of March 14, *Add. MSS.* 9304: 'After Tunis we intend to go for Tripoli.'

[2] Thurloe, iii. 487.

[3] On June 13 Cromwell wrote to Blake that he had sent him orders about the Plate fleet overland via Leghorn, and also by a ketch direct by sea (Thurloe, iii. 547). The question is whether the orders were sent early enough to have reached Blake at Formentara by May 16. Cromwell's words show that they were sent off before April 28, as Dr. Gardiner points out (*Commonwealth &c.* iii. 392 *n.*), but they were probably sent much earlier. A ketch for the purpose was called for by the Admiralty Committee on

Of Blake's immediate movements there is no record, but in ten days' time the two frigates which had been detached to Alicante and Cartagena, having loaded up the guns, came up with the main body of the fleet as it was in the act of passing the Straits. The reason Blake had been so long on the way is not clear, but there is an explanation worth suggesting, as it involves the possible truth of one of the most striking episodes of the legend.

Bishop Burnet relates that when 'Blake with the fleet happened to be at Malaga, before he made war on Spain,' some of his seamen went ashore, and, meeting the Host, began to jeer at the people for making obeisance. At the instigation of the priests, the crowd set upon them and sent them back to their ships very severely handled. Once on board the men complained to Blake, and the admiral promptly sent on shore a trumpet to demand the surrender of the ringleader of the priests. The Governor replied he had no jurisdiction over priests; whereupon Blake declared that that was no concern of his, but that if the offender was not given up within three hours he

March 26 (*Dom. Cal.* 452). There was some delay in fitting her out, but presumably the orders were ready and duplicates were sent off by land very soon after this call—that is, early in April. Dr. Gardiner, however, believed they were entrusted to Capt. Nixon of the 'Centurion,' a fourth-rate frigate, about the end of April, and that he landed the messenger somewhere in the Mediterranean and sent him to Leghorn overland. If this was so Blake cannot have received the orders at Formentara on May 17. But the letters which on May 1 Vice-Admiral Jordan says he had given to Nixon cannot have been there sent overland. Nixon, with the 'Centurion' and 'Dragon,' sailed as convoy to the victuallers which Cromwell distinctly says he sent off *after* the overland orders had gone, and these vessels met Blake at Cadiz (Thurloe, iii. 547, *Dom. Cal.* viii. pp. 468, 471). The despatches Nixon carried must have been those which Blake refers to in his cypher despatch of June 12 as 'the secret instructions sent by your Highness referring me to a former instruction touching the Silver fleet' (Thurloe, iii. 541).

These 'former instructions' must have been those sent off by Longland from Leghorn on May 1 by the 'Warwick' pinnace to Alcudia Bay (Thurloe, iii. 422). This is just the time he would have received letters from London, sent off overland at the end of March, the post time being, as appears from his correspondence, about four to five weeks. The probability is that, on his way to Formentara from Algiers, Blake detached his despatch ketch to Alcudia Bay to bring on anything he found at the rendezvous, that she found there the 'Warwick' pinnace, the 'Elias,' and the 'Betty,' and thus it was that her arrival at Formentara with the 'Warwick's' despatches was followed by Blake's sudden change of plan.

would burn the town. The priest was sent. Blake reprimanded him for not having lodged a formal complaint of the seamen's conduct. Had he done so they should have been punished. He would suffer no man of his to insult the established religion of a country, but at the same time he would have all men know that an Englishman was only to be punished by an Englishman. And with that he let the priest go. 'Cromwell,' Burnet adds, 'was much delighted with this, and read the letters in Council with great satisfaction, and said he hoped he should make the name of an Englishman as great as ever that of a Roman had been.'[1] The story may be a pure myth, but Burnet can hardly have invented it, and all we know of Blake's movements renders it quite possible that something of the kind really occurred. We know, moreover, that when he called at Malaga on his way out, one of his boats for some unexplained reason had been detained and that the fleet sailed without it. It is on the assumption that the Bishop's story related to this visit that modern scepticism has rejected it.[2] But it is almost certain that Blake visited Malaga a second time on his way out of the Straits. He was ten days—that is, from May 17 to May 27—getting from Formentara to Gibraltar, and, as we know from the log of the 'Amity,' one of the two frigates detached for the guns, they met with calms and baffling airs from the 25th to the morning of the 27th as they turned westward.[3] The fleet could not have passed the Straits in such weather, and Malaga was the ordinary place for vessels to lie while waiting for a wind to carry them out. Hence nothing is more probable than that Blake lay there three days at this time, and while doing so he may well have demanded redress either for the previous detention of his boat or for some new insult to his flag. In any case there is nothing in the known facts of the case to justify an out-of-hand rejection of the bishop's story, and Blake may still be credited with his famous vindication of his country's honour.

[1] *History of his Own Times*, i. 80 (138).
[2] Gardiner, *Commonwealth &c.* iii. 373, *n.*
[3] Weale's *Journal.*

It was the last act of that memorable cruise. With admirable skill, and the shameless craft which was then the foundation of all foreign politics both at home and abroad, Cromwell had extracted from it the utmost possible advantage. By permitting Blake's last move on Toulon he had blinded the Spaniards' eyes till the very last moment. Blake had scarcely reached Cadiz before it was known that Penn's fleet was in the West Indies. Yet in the previous week the Governor of Alicante and Cartagena had been handing over Rupert's guns to the English captains with effusive compliments. Even at Cadiz, when Blake asked leave to careen his ships in the port, orders came down from Madrid that it was to be permitted; but, having probably in the meanwhile learnt the news that had come across the Atlantic, he prudently declined the invitation when it arrived. It was safer to anchor off Rota, and there in the mouth of the bay he lay quietly revictualling before the Spaniards' eyes from the storeships that had arrived from England. No one could doubt what his business was. He had come there, every one said, to intercept the treasure fleet if Penn missed it, and by the King's order incessant prayers were offered for its safety in the monasteries and convents.[1]

Such were indeed his orders, and a little later they were supplemented by instructions to prevent any relief getting out to the West Indies to interfere with Penn. They were accompanied by the Protector's hearty approval of what his admiral had done at Tunis. He acknowledged the good hand of God in it, as Blake had pointed out; but at the same time he added: 'I think myself obliged to notice your courage and good conduct therein, and do esteem that you have done a very considerable service to this Commonwealth.'[2] For the present he was destined to do no more. Though he remained on the coast all the summer, the treasure fleet did not come,

[1] Sir Percy Wright to Thurloe (Thurloe, iii. 542).

[2] This letter of approval, in answer to Blake's apology for attacking Porto Farina without orders, is clearly the origin of the widely believed story that Blake received a pardon from Cromwell. Practically he did, and the story can hardly be said to be a 'pure fiction' (Gardiner, *First Dutch War*, i. 24, *n.*).

and no Indian relief put out. It is true a fleet hastily gathered and equipped in Cadiz did get to sea, but war had not been declared and it avoided an action. Blake on his part did not press one, since he had no authority to attack a fleet not bound for the Indies. By the end of summer the admiral with his fifty-six years was so broken by the long strain to which he had been exposed that he could not conceal his condition from the Protector. Cromwell at once gave him leave to stay out or come home as he pleased, and on October 6, with his fleet as worn and strained as himself, he anchored in the Downs.

CHAPTER XVIII

CROMWELL'S WAR WITH SPAIN

THE remarkable success of Blake's memorable demonstration gave the course of English Mediterranean power a new and stronger impulse. Henceforth it moves in a fuller flood. The main channel becomes clearly recognisable, and the slenderer streams that go to swell its bulk lose their importance. While we traced the sources, each rivulet—the small beginnings that make great ends—had to be examined with patient scrutiny that to each might be justly apportioned its relative share. But as they unite in a wider bed the course becomes clearer and we may travel down it at greater speed. The rivulets that formerly were parent streams become mere tributaries that deserve no more than passing notice. It is with the broad features of our progress that we are now concerned, and these we may observe as we are carried ever more rapidly down the increasing current.

Cromwell's Spanish war was little concerned with action within the Straits. It was conceived in the Elizabethan spirit, and in the Elizabethan spirit it was waged. It was mainly an Ocean war, and yet the lessons of Blake's cruise were not wholly forgotten. The great contribution of that cruise to naval thought has never been sufficiently recognised. It was not his swoop on Naples, his threat on Toulon, or even his exploit on the Tunis batteries that was its most memorable feature. It was those three impatient weeks—wasted weeks as it seemed—when at the outset of his campaign he lay at Gibraltar fuming because the Brest division did not come. It was in those weeks, when men said he had thrown away his chance of striking Guise, that he had really defeated him, and not only

him but Mazarin's whole Mediterranean policy. By seizing the Straits and holding them as he did, he had prevented Guise receiving at the essential moment the powerful addition to his force on which he relied for success; the heart was stricken out of the French commanders, their action was cramped and made abortive, and finally all hope of renewing the attempt after the first miscarriage was destroyed. It is true that a crushing blow at Guise's demoralised fleet would have made a more brilliant impression for the moment, but for deep and lasting influence on the balance of sea power it could not compare with what Blake's timely inaction achieved. By the still pressure of those lost weeks he had given to English naval strategy a priceless maxim. He had demonstrated the surpassing importance of Gibraltar and the inherent weakness of the French position. His action had brought naked to the surface the cardinal fact that the two seats of her naval energy were separated widely and by a narrow defile. It was clear that the prompt seizure or even the threat to seize this defile must place in English hands the initiative in any naval war with her old enemy. This then was the priceless secret that Blake had laid bare—the true significance of the Gibraltar defile. Priceless indeed it was to those who had eyes to see—for it is not too much to say that to this enduring geographical condition, more than to any other single factor, England owed her final domination of the sea.

It is not of course pretended that the truth was clearly recognised at once. The great facts of strategy have always grown slowly to axiomatic solidity, rather by repeated example than sudden precept. It is one of the most remarkable features of Drake's wide grasp of naval problems that he was able to formulate his intuitions as clearly as he did. Blake may have done as much in the present case, but so little that he wrote has survived that we cannot tell. All we know is that at the very next opportunity the idea recurred. Spain was now to find herself in the same position as France. In her case also the two main seats of her naval energy were separated by the

Gibraltar defile. In the days of the old war this had not been so, and this was no doubt one reason why the Elizabethan admirals had neglected Gibraltar. At that time Spain held Portugal and had no sailing navy in the Mediterranean. Consequently the central point of her naval power lay not at Gibraltar but at Cape St. Vincent. To the north of it lay Lisbon and the ports of Galicia, Biscay, and Flanders; to the south, Cadiz and Seville, the great seats of the American marine, and such Italian ports as could contribute to her oceanic strength. St. Vincent then, as Drake saw, was the true point of division. Here it was he performed one of his most daring and miraculous exploits in seizing the Cape, and throughout the war his pupils continued to regard St. Vincent as the key of the Spanish position. But with the loss of Portugal and Osuna's foundation of a sailing navy in the Two Sicilies the centre of gravity shifted to Gibraltar. Thus, so soon as the new war breaks out, we see the neglected idea of the Scottish soldier of fortune being forced again to the front, and the Straits assuming an importance which they had never enjoyed before.

As in the case of Drake's descent on the West Indies and the Spanish Main in 1585, formal war did not immediately follow the attack of Penn and Venables on Hispaniola and Jamaica. Throughout the autumn and winter of 1655 the Spaniards made earnest efforts to come to an arrangement; but on the English demands for the religious exterritoriality of their merchantmen in Spanish ports and for the open door in the Indies neither side would give way. It was the old quarrel which James's premature peace had left unsettled, and it had to be fought out. Though war was not actually proclaimed by Spain till February 1656, a powerful fleet had been brought forward in the English ports during the winter months. Blake was to command it, but as his health was far from restored he begged for a colleague. To his serious dissatisfaction, as it is said, Cromwell appointed his young friend Edward Montague, better known in Restoration days as the Earl of Sandwich. This brilliant and attractive gentleman was one of Cromwell's mistakes. A cousin of

the Earl of Manchester, the first Parliamentary Commander-in-Chief, he had thrown in his lot with the popular cause and been given premature military preferment. After Manchester's retirement his favour continued. When barely yet twenty years of age he had received the command of a regiment in the New Model army, and had fought at Naseby and the siege of Bristol. Though, as Clarendon says, he had the reputation of 'a very stout and sober young man,' there is no sign of his having particularly distinguished himself, nor indeed of his having taken any further part in the struggle till Cromwell's rise to supreme power again attracted him. In August 1654 he had been appointed one of the Commissioners of the Treasury, and thus he was not yet thirty, with absolutely no experience of the sea and very little of war at all, when he was suddenly thrust up to share the position which Blake had so hardly earned. The explanation of the appointment must be sought in Cromwell's personal affection and Montague's own pecuniary difficulties. Pepys, his most ardent admirer and devoted client, says he was heavily in debt at the time, and the main object of the coming campaign was the capture of the Spanish treasure fleet. The result of the appointment was from our present point of view a very striking modification of the action which Cromwell had in his mind.

As usual, the admirals' instructions are not extant and we have again to gather them from their proceedings. The fleet was a very powerful one. At its head, bearing the flag of both the admirals, was the 'Naseby,' a new frigate-built first-rate of over 1600 tons and 80 guns, just launched at Woolwich and the pride of the Protectorate navy. Next her was the famous 'Resolution,' which was originally intended for Lawson's flag; but at the last moment, for political reasons, he was superseded by Badiley. No list of the fleet exists, but it certainly consisted of not less than forty-five sail and included at least eight second-rates and several third-rates.[1]

[1] Thurloe, v. 69. Montague, on May 20, says there were sixteen frigates before Cadiz and twenty-seven sail at Tangier, including fire-ships and victuallers, besides at least two detached frigates, the 'Phœnix' and 'Sap-

Owing to the difficulty of manning so large a force and other reasons it was not till the end of March that the admirals cleared from Torbay. The result was that the treasure fleet got into Cadiz before them, and their chance of a rich capture was gone till the next one was due in the summer. They were thus thrown back on their secondary objects, one of which, it becomes clear, was to establish a footing on Spanish territory at some point from which they could control the Straits and also prevent an expedition sailing from Cadiz for the recovery of Jamaica. On April 15, off the south-west of Portugal, Montague sent to Thurloe the unwelcome intelligence they had obtained. Not only the newly arrived treasure fleet but the galleons of the Indian Guard that had not already got away with the outward convoy were snug in the inmost recesses of Cadiz harbour, where it was almost impossible to attack them, and it was certain that the Spaniards did not mean, as had been hoped, to put out and risk an action. Further he says, 'They have sent two new regiments for Gibraltar, and the Duke of Medina is as active as he can [be] in securing the coast. You may well judge upon this intelligence what straights we are in to resolve our actings: what respect to have to the Indies, and what to attempt here worth the while.' The weather was too boisterous to hold a council, and it was not till five days later, on April 20, he was able to send the result of their deliberations.

After a long and careful reconnaissance it was decided that as things stood it was impossible to do anything at Cadiz. 'We had then,' Montague continues, 'some debate of Gibraltar, and there appeared no great mind to it in regard of hardness and want of land men formed, and officers and numbers of men too, all of which are real obstacles, as you may judge upon the description of the

phire.' From the minute-book of the Navy Commissioners (*Add. MSS.* 1905, f. 180) and Stayner's despatch (Thurloe, v. 399), and other scattered notices we know the fleet included, besides the first-rates 'Naseby' and 'Resolution,' the 'Andrew' (52), 'Rainbow' (54), 'Unicorn' (50), 'Plymouth' (54), 'Bridgewater' (52), 'Speaker' (64), 'George' (52)—all second-rates—and the 'Entrance' (40), 'Bristol' (44), 'Taunton' (40), and 'Jersey' (40), third-rates.

place [and] the number and quality of our men; and to say the truth the seamen are not for land service unless it be a sudden plunder. They are valiant, but not to be ruled and kept in any government ashore. Nor have your sea officers much stomach to fight ashore. Yet this work is not thrown aside on debate.'[1]

From these remarks of Montague's it is clear the idea of Gibraltar must have been in the admirals' minds from the first, and it was now to be pressed from home. A week later, on April 28, when Cromwell had learnt from independent sources how unfavourably events had fallen, he sent the admirals a series of suggestions for the future conduct of the campaign. First he proposed the destruction of the Spanish fleet where it lay, and, if this were found impracticable, an attempt on Cadiz itself.[2] Failing this he asks them to consider 'whether any other place be attemptable, especially that of the town and castle of Gibraltar, which, if possessed and made tenable by us, would it not be both an advantage to our trade and an annoyance to the Spaniard, and enable us without keeping so great a fleet on that coast, with six nimble frigates lodged there, to do the Spaniard more harm than by a fleet and ease our own charge?' Here we have the first definite suggestion of the permanent occupation of Gibraltar as a naval station, and it comes from Cromwell's pen. With whom the idea originated we cannot tell. From Montague's concern for the place it would look as if it had been mentioned before they sailed. It is probable, as the custom was, that the designers of the campaign had had the records of similar expeditions before them and had noted Colonel Bruce's proposal to Lord Wimbledon in 1625. After the fleet sailed, however, the idea must for

[1] Thurloe, v. 67. The word 'stomach' is there wrongly deciphered 'stoars.' It is written 90, 6, 19, 7, 9, 25, which reads 'stoack,' the 'm' being obviously omitted.

[2] Carlyle here mistakes Cromwell's meaning. He does not contemplate the destruction of the Suazo bridge, close by which the whole Spanish force was concentrated, but *suggests* it may be neutralised as a line of relief for Cadiz by throwing entrenchments across the narrowest part of the island of Léon, and so cutting the road from the bridge to the town. It was so Essex had intended his attack to be covered in 1596, though by mistake the covering force went on to the bridge.

some reason have taken firmer hold of the Protector's mind and caused him to lay more stress upon it. So far indeed had the project gone with him that he is said to have formed a design for cutting through what is now the neutral ground and turning Gibraltar into an island.[1]

Meanwhile, in search of water, the admirals had moved down to Tangier, leaving a division of fourteen frigates under the rear-admiral to blockade Cadiz. On their way they fell in with Cromwell's messenger, and ten days later, on May 13, after they had been lying at Tangier a week, Montague took two frigates across the Straits and made a close reconnaissance of the Rock in person. The result appears to have been that the more he looked at it the less he liked it. Still it could not be lightly abandoned. Cromwell's messenger was a certain Captain Lloyd, whom the Protector specially recommended as a person of integrity and in full possession of his ideas. In virtue of his verbal instructions Lloyd appears to have laid particular stress on the Gibraltar project. 'I perceive,' Montague wrote a week later, 'much desire that Gibraltar should be taken. My thoughts as to that are in short these: that the likeliest way to get it is by landing on the sand and quickly cutting it off between sea and sea, or so to secure our men there as they may hinder the intercourse of the town with the main, frigates lying near to assist them: and it is well known that Spain never victualleth a place for one month. This will want four or five thousand men, well formed and officered.' This he said was only his own private opinion, for a council had not yet been called to reconsider the question.

What Blake thought we cannot tell. We have none of his letters, and Montague never refers to him, and the impression we get is that he was either ill or too discontented for energetic action. Still there is reason to believe he was of Montague's opinion; at any rate it was

[1] Sir Henry Sheeres, *A Discourse concerning the Mediterranean Sea &c.* (See *post*, pp. 366, 518.) To the edition of 1705, published immediately after the place was taken by Rooke, is a plan of it, and beside the neutral ground it has this note: 'Oliver Cromwell had a design on this place and would have cut this neck of land to make Gibraltar an island.'

decided not to make any attempt for the present, and Lloyd was sent back to report to Cromwell and receive his decision. It is possible that Montague's keen anxiety for prize money may have had a good deal to do with its postponement, but his reasons for not attempting the enterprise have much weight. There were certainly a number of soldiers in the fleet who had been shipped when seamen were found so hard to get and so disaffected; but, as Montague said, they were not 'formed'—that is, organised in companies and regiments for shore service—and they had no officers. Moreover, there was for the moment more pressing business in hand. Portugal was making difficulties over the ratification of the commercial treaty that had lately been concluded, and was suspected of an intention to throw in her lot with Spain. Montague was eager to seize the occasion as an excuse for capturing their homeward-bound Brazil convoy, which was just due. The English envoy at Lisbon had suggested this step, and it would seem that Lloyd had brought them authority to take it. By his hands or shortly afterwards they received definite instructions to make a demonstration before Lisbon with a peremptory demand for ratification. Much to Montague's disgust—and he made no secret of it—the effect was immediate. The Portuguese gave in and the Brazil fleet had to be left alone.

This business done, the admirals returned to Cadiz to see once more if Cromwell's suggestions could not be carried out.[1] But all seemed as hopeless as before. Both admirals were now agreed that 'nothing could be done against the Spaniard.' Proposals were made for attempting Bayona in Galicia, and also for plundering Majorca, but Blake rejected them all. A hint had been received from home that if nothing could be done against the Spanish attitude of passive defence, the bulk of the fleet should be sent back. So lame a conclusion was little to Blake's mind. The fact was, his heart was set on completing the work he had but half done in his previous campaign, and a new cruise in the Mediterranean was at

[1] Pointer's letters (*Dom. Cal.* 373), June 16, 1656, and Montague's in Thurloe, v. 170, June 30.

this time practically decided on. 'We have in a manner resolved,' wrote Montague on the last day of June, 'to appear in the Straits as high as Tripoli, and make a league with that place if we can, as also Tunis it may be.' The idea was to leave thirteen sail, including the largest ships, under Badiley to watch Cadiz and, after detaching a squadron against Salee, to proceed into the Mediterranean with the rest. It was a programme that promised far too little remuneration to please Montague. For all Cromwell's high-handed ways he did not venture to establish a commercial blockade of Cadiz. That which they were working was purely military, and practically unproductive. It broke Montague's heart to see the flourishing trade neutrals were doing with the enemy, 'which,' he lamented, 'we cannot hinder unless we should fight all the world.' Contraband they did attempt to stop, but with small effect and much loss of temper. 'It begets a deal of ill-will,' he added; 'in short, is the worst piece of work we meet with.' He was tired and disgusted with a service so different from what he had hoped, and he ended by urging that fifteen sail of nimble frigates kept permanently on the station, careening and watering at Lisbon, could do more than the fleet they had.

There were moral effects, however, of which he took no note. That powerful fleet and Blake's name produced within the Mediterranean an impression which was deep and lasting, and which is for us the highest interest of the campaign. From Leghorn Longland was watching its effect with his characteristic acuteness. The possibilities the fleet possessed of striking in a score of different places kept every cabinet concerned in a wholesome state of anxious deference. As early as February Longland had written that on the first news that Blake was coming to sea again the Pope had had all the treasure of Loretto removed inland. In April he said he had sent down two thousand masons to fortify his coast towns. Others believed Blake's objective was Elba, Majorca, or Sicily, and generally the Italian Princes dreaded that the French ambitions were to be supported by the English fleet. The alarm moderated when Blake was known to be operating

off Cadiz; but when, about midsummer, rumours came in that he was after all coming into the Mediterranean, it redoubled, and not without cause. At a moment when it seemed to the admirals they were most impotent, to us, who can view the whole field, they present a picture of striking potency, and afford us a notable demonstration of the power which a Mediterranean fleet can give to England for playing on the strings of Europe.

The trouble about ratifying the treaty with Portugal had been raised by the Church. The priests, scandalised at the article which gave religious exterritoriality to the English merchants, took up an irreconcilable attitude, and to the English protests the King replied he was not king of the Church, and must refer the article for the Pope's consent. The successful demonstration of the fleet before Lisbon, which had compelled him to stand by his word, was thus for Cromwell and his men a direct blow at what they regarded as the cloven hoof of Rome. Ever since his accession the new Pope, Alexander VII., had fixed his policy on bringing about peace between France and Spain. The amazing military successes of the new King of Sweden, Charles Gustavus, were filling Catholic eyes with amazement. Another Gustavus Adolphus had arisen, and it was known that the no less terrible Cromwell was devoting all his energy to forming with him a great Protestant alliance against the supposed aggression of Rome. The Pope's idea was doubtless defensive. For him it was the Protestants who threatened aggression. His project of bringing peace to the faithful was, however, going but badly. The previous year he had seen France compelled to back Cromwell's intervention on behalf of the Vaudois Protestants, and now negotiations were actually on foot between Cromwell and Mazarin for an offensive alliance against Spain. When, to crown the danger, he saw Portugal on the brink of placing herself in the Protector's hands, it was but natural he should interfere, and, having failed and been found out, that he and every one else should expect retaliation.

When Cromwell as yet did not know what the end

of the Vaudois affair was to be, he had drawn attention to the fact that at Nice and Villafranca, the territory of their persecutor, the Duke of Savoy, lay open to his fleet, and the Pope knew that his own Romagna was equally exposed. All kinds of stories went the round of Europe, pointing to the extreme anxiety that was felt at Rome. So soon as the new danger was grasped, it was said the Pope summoned the Ambassadors of Spain, Venice, Florence, and other great and powerful princes, and showed them how they were all threatened by the English fleet, with which that of Turkey was to be joined in secret alliance.[1] The sound of a couple of Dutch ships saluting at Civita Vecchia threw Rome into a panic. It was said that Blake had seized the port. The Pope ordered his heavy artillery to be drawn out of the Castle of St. Angelo and planted in the streets, and the whole city to stand to arms. 'Whereby,' wrote Longland, in sending the report, 'you may please observe first, particularly, of whom the Pope is most afraid, which I cannot but take for a good omen, that God may please to give deliverance to Christendom by English arms.'[2]

As to the best use to which the idle fleet might be put, Longland had his own ideas. His eyes were still set on the heart of the Mediterranean. The Neapolitans, he said, were again in a state of great unrest, and so serious was their disaffection that he was certain, if Blake appeared in the bay and declared he had come to help the people to throw off the Spanish yoke, they would rise to a man. The mistake the French had twice made need not be repeated. He named a native nobleman, of vast wealth, great popularity, and English connections, who was ready to place himself at the head of the movement. Thus Naples might become a kingdom under a sovereign of its own, and be permanently lost to Spain, and that he declared would be a greater blow to her than the loss of all her Indies.[3]

None of these plans were destined to be carried out.

[1] From Cologne, June 16, 1656 (Thurloe, v. 93).
[2] *Ibid.* v. 137. [3] *Ibid.* v. 93, June 6–16.

No sooner had Blake resolved to enter the Mediterranean than strong easterly weather set in that held him at Cadiz. Instead of abating, it increased to a violent tempest, and so shattered the fleet that ten of the frigates had to be sent home. Still, on July 9, leaving Badiley with twelve sail before Cadiz, the admirals were able to weigh for the Straits with about fourteen sail. 'God send us a good voyage,' Montague concluded his despatch, 'and good news from England at our return.' It was not, however, for Tunis or Tripoli that they were now bound. While awaiting Cromwell's decision about Gibraltar they had resolved to look out for a place on the Barbary side of the Straits which might serve their turn for careening and watering, 'in case,' as Montague wrote, 'you come to need it on another occasion.' He called the place they had their eye on Boremo or Buzema, by which he probably meant the island of Albucemas, on the Riff coast, about a hundred miles within the Straits.[1] 'Let me add by the way,' he further said, 'that if we could find such a place commodious, it were an unspeakable advantage to England to have a fort and possession thereof.' His expression should be remembered, for in it we seem to have the germ of the idea which was destined for years to replace that of Gibraltar. For the present nothing came of it, for the place was found wholly unsuitable. They did not, however, return empty-handed. Five frigates and a fire-ship had been detached to Malaga, under a Captain Smith, with a view of destroying some shipping which was known to be lying there. With his fire-ship he burnt two vessels lying under the mole, a galley, and half a dozen smaller craft. Then, having driven the Spaniards from the mole by his fire, he landed upon it, spiked the guns of the battery, and came off with the loss of six killed.

Returning to Cadiz and finding no orders from home, the admirals now went down to Salee to force a treaty

[1] See *post*, p. 324, *note*. It is conceivable also that he meant the bay of Beuzus, an anchorage close to Ceuta and immediately opposite Gibraltar.

and release captives. By September 1 they were back again at Cadiz, and still without orders as to Gibraltar or sending home the larger ships. In a week they had to go on to Lisbon for water, leaving Stayner with a frigate squadron to maintain the blockade. Scarcely were their backs turned when it came on to blow from the west, and he had to stand out to sea. The same wind, as luck would have it, was bringing in the flota of Tierra Firme, which carried the treasure of Peru, and while his frigates were scattered he fell in with it. Thus, without any warning, the great chance had come. Sadly fallen from its old glories, the fleet consisted of but seven sail and a Portuguese prize. There were but two galleons, with two armed *urcas* or 'hulks' and three merchantmen. Stayner had only three of his frigates in a position to engage, the rest being to leeward; but they were all three second-rates of over fifty guns, and more than a match for their prey. Undeceived by the admiral's flag being flown on one of the urcas, Stayner let it go and made for the galleons. After a six hours' action, one of them which carried the Marquis of Baydes, Governor of Chile, was burnt. The other and one of the merchantmen were taken, and the remaining urca was sunk. The pseudo-flagship and the prize were chased ashore, while the two other merchantmen escaped into Gibraltar. It was one of the sharpest blows that had ever been dealt by England to the Indian trade. To the Spaniards it meant a loss in modern value of about ten millions sterling, to Cromwell a gain of three millions.[1] So beyond all expectation the main object of the campaign was after all accomplished, and Stayner's great stroke of fortune brought it to an end.

He had not long joined the main fleet in the Tagus with his prizes when the long-awaited orders arrived from the Protector. For more than a month after Lloyd had

[1] In the above account I have mainly followed the Spanish version (Duro, *Armada Española*, v. 22), rectifying where possible by Stayner's own despatch (Thurloe, v. 399). The odds were certainly greatly in favour of the English, and Stayner in his very modest report did not seek to exaggerate his exploit.

arrived with the admirals' reply to his suggestions, Cromwell had delayed his decision. He was in the throes of forcing Mazarin into a joint operation against Dunkirk, and it would seem that he meant to hold Blake and his fleet *in terrorem* until he knew what line the Cardinal meant to take. It was not till August 17 that Lockhart, his ambassador extraordinary at the French Court, was able to assure him that Mazarin had given in and had begun caressing him with an almost suspicious cordiality. Eleven days later Cromwell's instructions to his admirals were sent down to Plymouth.[1]

In despair of orders they had just decided to winter in the Tagus, to be ready for action at the earliest moment next year; but Cromwell's despatch proved a complete endorsement of the views which Montague had sent home by Captain Lloyd. He noted that they had found it impossible to move the Spaniard or to attack him in his harbours; 'and as for any design on Gibraltar,' he adds, 'we see by General Montague's letter to the Secretary that nothing therein was feasible without a good body of landsmen,' and in view of his project against Dunkirk he had no troops to spare. With Dunkirk substituted for Gibraltar as the main objective, the whole fleet was clearly no longer required where it was. Montague was therefore to bring home the largest ships, while Blake with twenty frigates, or such other number as he deemed advisable, was to stay out and hold the station.

With this decision of Cromwell's his Mediterranean policy sank to a mere accessory to his main line of energy. Having decided to concentrate his action on the ports of the Spanish Netherlands, and establish there a foothold on the continent, he abandoned the idea of Gibraltar. Thereafter the war took a different turn. Owing to the mutual jealousies of the Protestant powers the Baltic for the moment assumed a more important place than the Mediterranean, while Stayner's success and affairs in the West Indies fixed the maritime war more definitely still

[1] Thurloe, v. 817, 363.

to Elizabethan lines. It was a war policy that was crowned by the famous exploit of Blake and Stayner upon the flota of New Spain at Teneriffe in the following year—an exploit which was also the crown of Blake's own reputation. On his way home in triumph he died, and in a few weeks Badiley followed him to an honoured grave. Neither lived to demonstrate the value of the work they had set on foot, or to complete what they had begun. Still its effects were far from lost, as the remaining events of the Protectorate administration proved.

The importance that was attached to continuing a Mediterranean fleet is marked by the fact that, a few months after Montague's return, it was decided to establish at Tetuan a purveyor for the navy, and this resolution was carried out early in the year 1657.[1] With Lisbon as a careening port and Tetuan as a victualling station the squadron was thus fairly well based, even without Gibraltar, and on this system it continued to be worked. When Blake went home, Captain John Stoakes, who had served as his captain throughout his Mediterranean cruise and had commanded the blockading division off Cadiz during his chief's absence at Teneriffe, was left in command of the station with a squadron of about twenty frigates. At the end of the year, when it became apparent that the fleet which had been laboriously preparing at Cadiz could never get to sea, he was ordered to send home all but ten sail, and with these to enter the Mediterranean and put a stop to the depredations of the Tunis and Tripoli corsairs. As a first step he sent forward Captain Whetstone, a nephew of the Protector, with four frigates to cruise between Malta and Crete with instructions to use the Venetian island of Zante as a base and rendezvous. He himself proceeded to Leghorn, presumably for stores and beverage. His reception was far from cordial. The Grand Duke's attitude was so unfriendly that Stoakes suspected him of having been seduced to the Spanish interest, and before he left relations had grown very strained. Still, in spite

[1] Minute-book of the Navy Commissioners, *Add. MSS.* 1905, ff. 221, 229, January 10 and February 24, 1657.

of all difficulties, he was able to appear before Tunis at the end of January 1658. He at once demanded the release of all British captives as a preliminary to further negotiation. The Bey, in a spirit very different from that which he had previously displayed, replied that he was ready to ransom them upon the same terms as Blake had accepted at Algiers. Stoakes was for fighting, but having ascertained that there were eight men-of-war in Porto Farina, and that the forts had been greatly strengthened, and knowing also his own frigates were too foul to do good work, he decided to offer a ransom. Ultimately he induced the Bey to give up all the prisoners for about a tenth of their market value. He then was admitted into Porto Farina to clean, and before he had done he successfully negotiated a treaty which rendered English commerce immune from interference, and gave the war vessels of each state freedom of the other's ports. Having thus satisfactorily settled matters at Tunis, he had to return to the northward to recruit before doing anything against Tripoli. At Leghorn he was bluntly refused pratique and actually fired upon for taking a prize in alleged breach of the neutrality of the port. As he said, he had done nothing but what every Dutch admiral had done before him, and he himself had seen Blake do far more. But Leghorn was becoming thoroughly Spanish. Even the provisions which had been prepared for him he was not permitted to take on board, and, not wishing to involve the country in hostilities with Tuscany, he contented himself with sending a protest to Florence and reporting home, and betook himself to Marseilles.[1]

There he had now a certainty of the most cordial reception. For Mazarin his ally's fleet in the Mediter-

[1] See Stoakes's despatches of January 9 and February 27, 1658, in *Domestic Calendar*, ii. 259, 307, and Thurloe, vii. 77; of March 29, *Carte MSS.* 73; of April, *Rawlinson MSS.* A. 58. For the whole of his command see the last part of Weale's *Journal*, *ubi supra*, which unfortunately comes to an abrupt end on March 9, 1658, at Porto Farina, where it says Stoakes had just finished careening his frigates; Whetstone's *Letter-book* from January 29 to August 23 in *Rawlinson MSS.* C. 381; and the papers used at Whetstone's court-martial, *Add. MSS.* 1904, f. 169 *et seq.*

ranean was too tempting a chance to be thrown away. Ever since the beginning of the year an expedition had been in preparation at Toulon for some unknown objective. The Chevalier Paul was in charge of it, and the English Consul at Marseilles reported to Lockhart in Paris that it was believed to be for a renewal of the attempt on Naples.[1] It is possible a diversion of this kind may have been contemplated. Mazarin at this time was being pressed from various quarters to renew his old attempt on the Two Sicilies, and particularly by the eccentric Queen of Sweden who was now in Rome, and in spite of her abdication could not keep her fingers from politics. Her and her friends he gave to understand that such an enterprise was out of the question, but others were allowed to believe that he had it still in his mind and was only waiting his opportunity.[2] At the moment his hands were full with Flanders and with operations against the Spanish possessions in the north of Italy. There he was supporting the Duke of Modena, who was operating against Mantua from the southward. Early in March a thousand French troops had landed for his support at Viareggio, the chief port of the Duchy of Lucca. Leave for the purpose had been granted by the Duke; and Longland, in reporting the affair, appeared to believe his complacency was in some measure due to the presence of the English fleet. 'The Italian Princes,' he wrote, 'do all believe that the Protector's ships of war in these seas came chiefly to join with the French and carry on their designs against Spain.'[3] This was not true, but Mazarin was no man to miss the value of the impression or a chance of giving it emphasis. So soon, then, as he had finally fallen in with Cromwell's views as to the joint operations in Flanders, he ventured just at this time to request that some of the Mediterranean squadron might be permitted to act for a few weeks with

[1] Aldworth to Lockhart, February 9–19, 1658 (Thurloe, vi. 787).

[2] *Lettres de Mazarin*, vol. viii. To Père Dumeau, March 29, p. 689; to the Queen of Sweden, May 9, p. 709; to Card. Antonio Barberini, May 15, p. 714; to the Duke of Modena, June 19, p. 738; to the Duke of Castelnuovo, July 3, p. 747; to the Queen of Sweden, July 7, p. 749.

[3] Thurloe, vi. 824, 846, February 28, March 5, 1658.

the Chevalier Paul.[1] The object is nowhere mentioned, but there can be little doubt that the request related more or less directly to the operations of the Duke of Modena.

The idea which most strongly recommended itself to Mazarin at the moment was a fresh attempt to seize Orbitello and Porto Longone in Elba, and so block the line by which reinforcements passed from Spain to Milan.[2] This was probably the real intention, if indeed he had any at all, and the whole affair was not an astute piece of stage play. In any case the precise objective matters little for our purpose. Mazarin's chief anxiety was to prevent the Spaniards sending troops to reinforce Dunkirk, which they were known to be about to attempt, and the obvious way to achieve his end, as he well knew, was to threaten an offensive in the Mediterranean. Cromwell, on Lockhart's advice, at once granted the request, and promised him the co-operation of five or six frigates for six weeks, which was all Mazarin asked. They were to be at or near Toulon by June 1, but it was not till May 31 that the orders were sent off to Stoakes.[3] The French King, he was told, was about to undertake a naval expedition against the common enemy, and he was to detail five or six frigates to accompany the Toulon force 'to such place against the Spaniard as the admiral of the French fleet shall desire,' and to defend it against attack. These orders he received about the end of the month, and placed half his fleet under Captain Whetstone for the purpose. With the rest he determined to proceed to Tripoli and complete the work he had left undone.[4]

Whetstone at once took his squadron to Toulon; but though it was a month behind the time Mazarin had originally specified, he found the French fleet in no condition to sail. A demonstration was made before

[1] Lockhart to Thurloe (Thurloe, vi. 854, March 7, 1658, and vii. 70, April 11).

[2] Mazarin to Card. Barberini, February 5-15, 1658 (*Lettres*, viii. 679). Stoakes to ——, September 28, 1658 (*Carte MSS.* 73, f. 205 b).

[3] Thurloe, vii. 70, 155.

[4] Stoakes to Whetstone, June 29 (*Rawlinson MSS.* 381 and *Add. MSS.* 9304, f. 148). Same to Navy Commissioners (*Dom. Cal.* July 9). Same to Thurloe, June 21 (Thurloe, vii. 189).

Marseilles, which was again in a state of revolt, and that was all; and when August came Whetstone began to clamour to be liberated from the irksome service.[1]

As it happened, orders for his release were already on their way. In the interval the battle of the Dunes had been fought, the Spanish power in the Netherlands was completely broken, and Mazarin was looking awry at the price he had had to pay for Cromwell's help. To see Dunkirk in English hands was small incentive to similar joint operations elsewhere, even if he had ever seriously intended them; and when all was over his note to Lockhart began to change. He grumbled over everything connected with the situation in Flanders, and informed the ambassador that he had practically given up his project in the Mediterranean and that it was not worth while to detain Whetstone's frigates any longer. He would prefer a joint expedition to intercept the Spanish treasure fleet later on. As a matter of fact the threat had served its purpose and Mazarin found he had been hunting with the lion.[2]

How powerful must have been the moral effect of Whetstone's junction with the Toulon expedition became manifest when we see how Stoakes fared at Tripoli. The bare appearance of his little force before the port was enough to secure him the same success he had achieved at Tunis, and a treaty similar to those existing with the other Barbary states was exacted.[3] This was about the last news which Cromwell lived to receive from the Mediterranean, and so he saw his policy triumphant.

Still there was no idea of letting go the hold. A week earlier he had ordered the recall of half Stoakes's squadron, but not with any intention of abandoning the position he had taken up. It was rather with the view of increasing the efficiency of the Mediterranean fleet by substituting fresh ships for those that were spent. It was a policy

[1] Whetstone to the Admiralty Commissioners, August 3, 1658 (*Dom. Cal.* p. 108). A letter-book containing the whole of his correspondence at this time is in *Rawlinson MSS.* C. 381.

[2] Thurloe, vi. 369. Lockhart to Thurloe, July 8 (*ibid.* vii. 251, 306). Thurloe to Whetstone, July 27 (*Dom. Cal.* p. 101).

[3] Admiralty Commissioners to Stoakes, September 16 (*Dom. Cal.* p. 140).

which Montague continued to press, and under Richard Cromwell steps were taken to keep up Stoakes's strength.[1] Throughout the winter, acting from Toulon and Tetuan, he was able very effectually to police the trade routes and capture every Spanish war ship that ventured to show herself. Communications between Italy and Spain were rendered almost impossible. In the early part of 1659 he even made an attempt to take his slender force round to Cadiz with the bold intention of attacking the outward-bound West Indian fleet, but persistent westerly weather prevented his getting out of the Straits till his stores were exhausted. He was further much hampered by the insubordination and discontent of his captains. The political troubles which were beginning to shake Cromwell's fabric to pieces spread to the fleet. Whetstone had to be arrested and sent home, and another captain deserted with his ship.[2] But Stoakes by a firm hand managed to keep his force effective. Still the end was near. On his return to Toulon in 1659 to refit, instead of meeting with the usual welcome, he found himself received with marked coldness and even indignity. The explanation was not long in declaring itself. The French no longer required him. They had gained all they wanted, for the Spaniards were clearly ready to accept their terms of peace. On May 8 an armistice was signed between the two powers; on June 4 a preliminary treaty was agreed to, and a fortnight later Stoakes was recalled.[3]

From the first both Spain and France had each looked to the English alliance as a means to dictate peace to its adversary. The fact that Spain was so soon forced to accept the hard terms which France offered is usually attributed entirely to her disasters in Flanders. But, as we have seen, there was another and perhaps a more powerful consideration nearer home. The Spanish Court had always shown itself as indifferent to pressure in the Low Countries as

[1] Thurloe, vii. 306. *Dom. Cal.* p. 192, November 20–1, 1658.
[2] *Rawlinson MSS.* C. 381, and Stoakes's despatch, September 28, 1658 (*Carte MSS.* 73).
[3] *Dom. Cal.* June 17, 1658, p. 377.

it was nervous about the command of the Mediterranean. The mere fact that five English frigates joined the French admiral for a few weeks was little in itself, but as a threat of what might come it was in the last degree alarming. In the old war no amount of harrying of her oceanic commerce had served to bring Spain to her knees, but the same kind of danger in the Mediterranean was another thing. Longland probably only voiced the general opinion when he had recommended operations against Naples. 'I am confident,' said he, 'that the loss of this kingdom would be a greater blow to the Spaniard than the loss of the West Indies, for that affords him only money, but this both money and men.'[1] With the success of the French and English arms in Flanders, both Cromwell and Mazarin were free to resume their Mediterranean policy with vigour; and, should they choose to follow up the line which Whetstone's movement had indicated, there could be small hope of Spain retaining her Italian provinces. Her command of the connecting seas was wholly lost; her great empire lay exposed in disjointed fragments, incapable of mutual support; and had she not recognised the hopelessness of the situation by the treaty of the Pyrenees, her ruin could hardly have been averted. It is impossible then to believe that, in taking the humiliating step she did, and making peace on Mazarin's terms, she was not largely influenced by what had been happening within the Straits, and that Stoakes's forgotten presence at Toulon, which then caused so much stir in the neighbouring Courts, did not do much to emphasise the meaning and reach of a British Mediterranean fleet.

[1] Thurloe v. 93.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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